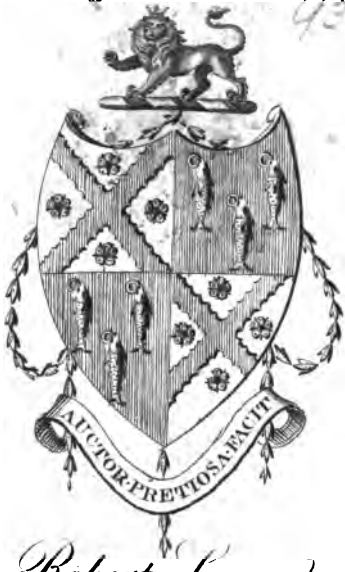

Robert Lenox

NEW YORK.

MEMOIRS

OF

THE REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

VOL. I.

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HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

MEMOIRS

OF

THE REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

FROM

HIS MARRIAGE TO HIS DEATH:

Founded on a Variety of Authentic Documents, furnished to the Author, before the Revolution, by many eminent Statesmen and Ministers; and on the Secret Papers discovered, after the 10th of August 1792, in the Closets of the King at Versailles and the Tuileries:

BY JOHN LEWIS SOULAVIE,

THE ELDER,

COMPILER OF THE MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL DUKE OF RICHELIEU, AND OF THE MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE OF ST. SIMON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

IN SIX VOLUMES,

Accompanied with Explanatory Tables, and One Hundred and Thirteen Portraits.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

By T. Davison, Lombard-Street, White-Friars.

1802.

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TO

THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

Epistle published by the Author 1789, *at the Head of* MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL DE RICHLIEU.

HISTORY, formerly so timid in France, before ministers who permitted nothing but flattery, has at length recovered its liberty and rights. The seal of visiers no more shall tarnish the productions of the human understanding; their emissaries no longer can break open our coffers, to seize our papers; and the satellites of the police have now no power over our persons. No more shall unfeeling jailors repress, in gloomy cells, the pious ejaculations of virtue and patriotism; and the citizen,

firm in his candour and integrity, no longer shall seek an asylum on foreign shores.

To your courage, Frenchmen, history is indebted for this liberty. Accept, as an earnest of gratitude, the homage of my labours. It is the portrait of Despotism in her last stage of existence; of the termination of your slavery, your humiliation, and your long forbearance; it is the picture of courtiers who ridiculed virtue and liberty; of powerful and daring libertinism that debauched your wives; of ministers who despoiled the people; of tyrants who exiled, imprisoned, or dispersed the magistracy; of intriguers who sold the nation and our sovereign to strangers; of insults offered to the majesty of our kings, and to that of the French people; and of the policy which has at length awakened you, in 1789, from your profound lethargy,

But it is also the affecting picture of persecuted innocence; of citizens endowed with simple or austere manners, assailed with ridicule; of just and popular ministers disgraced; of distinguished officers deprived of their commands; of talents and virtue driven from employments and prelatures; and of every description of timid virtues, whose only reward is to hold a distinguished place in the page of history.

It is, in fine, the portrait of men illustrious in the annals of war, in science, literature, and arts; of philosophers who have cultivated the public mind from the reign of the sultan, who still forbade, in 1710, the privilege of thinking, reasoning, writing, and assembling to remonstrate, till the memorable epoch, Frenchmen, when, as in times of yore, under Clovis, at the *Champ de Mars*,

you pronounce the law and present it to your kings, instead of vain remonstrances which formerly exhibited you as a subjected people.

SECOND EPISTLE

TO

THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

THE first year of liberty, in 1789, I partook of your desires and language. How were our hopes deceived! I was filled with indignation, like you, at the vices and cowardice of despotism in its decrepitude, and we fell into the power of a despotic government, which, in the folly and madness of its adolescence, sported with liberty and all the privileges of society. You were insulted with the licentiousness of courtiers who ridiculed virtue and modesty; and during ten years we have been governed by men, our fellow-citizens, who reigned over us by virtue of dungeons, proscriptions, or scaffolds.

The ancient government exiled or imprisoned refractory magistrates. It named judiciary commissions, and dictated to them how to decide. It imposed silence on men of letters, or else it commanded them to speak according to its wishes. Hence, you expected at the establishment of liberty on the fourteenth of July, that visiers would thenceforth respect the *literati* and their papers, and that they would establish no more judiciary commissions; nevertheless, you fell into the power of the companions of your victory, who not only demanded the papers, but also the liberty of your historians, your magistrates, of every class of citizens, republicans as well as royalists, and even neutral Frenchmen, moderate or unconcerned, who refused to take a part in political disputes.

In 1789 the French nation were unanimous in demanding a regular govern-

ment, and a free constitution; and you have been subjects of three constitutions, which, in the space of ten years, have produced nothing but sanguinary and intestine litigations. You looked with horror on bankruptcies, a term odious to Frenchmen; and, until the establishment of the present government, you had only experienced insolvent administrations.

An oath was in France a sacred institution. Perjury was a crime of magnitude. Nevertheless our solemn oaths were cancelled; and we were obliged to swear to hate ourselves.

In your first free assemblies you did not require the destruction of your altars, or the abolition of your divinities; yet you received the ephemeral gods of the revolution, even those of paganism, which were set up for your veneration.

The French nation, proud of their historical monuments, held them up to the admiration of Europe. They had been shown, to remind your neighbours and future generations, that France was the greatest nation on earth. Behold the ruins which surround us! and what monuments of dust or vapour have characterised the principal political events of the revolution!

By publishing at this time the history of the last reign of the monarchy, it is not departed despotism that I mean to deplore, or propose to future generations. I wish to publish a corrective of my preceding epistle of 1789. After ten years of proscription, I seize the first moment of liberty to complete my labours of history. I wish to prove, that if France should ever unanimously require the constitution destroyed in 1789, it would be impossible

to re-establish it. Its elements are no more. The present generation have neither the same manners, ideas, nor habitudes, which for many centuries were the vivifying principle of the ancient monarchy. The English, become strangers under Charles II. to the anterior contests of the people against royalty, rolled on from revolution to revolution after that prince's return; and, ever restless and uneasy in their nature, they found no solid basis till the eighteenth century.

A third part of the territorial property of France was devoted to ornament, and to the support of the two first orders of ancient society. This property is now become the aliment and basis of the revolution. Our morals are no longer those of monarchical and religious France; but those of the revolution. What was abased has gained its level; what was exalted has

been annihilated. Social hierarchy is no longer in existence.

I only desire (and my book throughout exhibits its convenience and utility), that government may borrow from the ancient *régime* all that its administration had imagined, to render France a powerful and respectable state; that, to calm the public mind, they may imitate the measures of Henry IV., who conciliated the affections of the league; that they may contemplate in our annals thoſe memorable and glorious times when power, having organised itself into government, re-organised society which it had confused.

France was happy and calm within, she was powerful and respected without, when Government and Society exerted themselves together for the public welfare.

The revolution, by establishing discord between society and government, has brought us to our present situation.

Unhappy France, if discord shall stay the progress of government in re-establishing society in its former rights and privileges!

Paris, 30 *Thermidor*, *Year IX.*
(17th August, 1801.)

PREFACE.

Of the Independence and Equity of the Historian—It is impossible for the History of the Fall of the Monarchy and that of the Factions which succeeded it, to be agreeable to all Parties, and appear to them just and impartial—Proofs of this Truth—Portrait of Maria Antoinetta, taken as an Example—Variety of Opinions of the Royalists, first Constituants, Girondists, and Montagnards, of that Princess—Conduct of an Historian under such Circumstances—How useful the History of the last Years of the Monarchy is to a new Government succeeding it—Sources of the present Work—Collection of all the Historical Prints published under the Reign of Louis XVI., forming, by their Chronological Union, twelve Volumes in Folio, on the History of Lewis XVI. —General Collection of every Thing printed during that Reign—Extracts and Papers taken, after the 10th of August, from the Port-folios and Packets preserved in the Cabinets and small Apartments of that Monarch at Versailles, Trianon, and the Tuilleries.

IT is not so difficult as it is generally supposed, to write the history of our own

time with impartiality. The best works on the history of France, are memoirs written by contemporaries. The equity of an historian is not a quality more difficult to deserve, than the equity of a magistrate who pronounces his sentence after having confronted the parties. It appears to me sufficient to make a firm resolution of rendering justice wherever it be due, to give to a book of this nature the character which I call *probity of history*.

What appears to me impossible is, to be impartial and obtain, at the same time, in a season of revolution, the approbation of our contemporaries. The fall of a monarchy can only be effected by furious and opposite passions, which we have to decide on and describe. How can we satisfy, in such a case, the different factions who are in a state of intoxication and disorder whilst

we are canvassing the interests of the vanquished, the vanquishers, and the decadence or fall of the moſt powerful monarchy of Europe? I shall demonstrate this truth by example.

Maria Antoinetta is one of the principal personages that influenced the events of the reign of Louis XVI.; and I observe, in publishing this work at the end of the ninth year of the French republic, that an interval of eight years, passed over since her death, has not yet subdued the resentment of the greatest part of her enemies, nor fixed upon her a decided opinion. The best intentions, and the language of truth with regard to that princess, are not sufficient for the historian to obtain the approbation of the chiefs of the opposite factions. This may be judged of from the effects I am about to exhibit.

Opinion of the Royalists of the ancient Régime as to Maria Antoinetta, Queen of France.

"Here are some anecdotes and historical traits which you gave me on Maria Antoinetta (said I to several persons well known under the ancient régime by their opposition to the queen). What would you say if I were to publish now what your resentment made me justly suspect? Behold the progress and effect of your hatred! It is you, and the rest of the disaffected of the court, who, before the revolution, exhibited that princess as a public spectacle. If you had attended to your interests rather than to your passions, you would have palliated the faults and errors of her age, sex, and rank, which you exaggerated. The people knew nothing more of the queen than her beauty, and her trium-

"phal entries into the metropolis; they "adored her in 1774; and you, by ani- "mating them against the court, began the "revolution you now deplore, and which "has been continued with so much fury "against yourselves."

"It is the effect of a common error "throughout our generation," answered an ancient courtier of Versailles; "and all "the nation, in order to become happy, "ought, like us, and with us, to repent "of the faults we have committed. The "directory has decreed a national *fête* on "the twenty-first of January; but the "nation can never be just till they in- "stitute, after the manner of England, "days of repentance, mourning, and con- "trition, to expiate their crimes, and par- "take of the regret which at present we "alone avow in France for our conduct "towards Lewis XVI. and Maria Aniot-

" netta, whom we never well knew until
" the days of her misery. She was a wo-
" man of great fortitude and virtue, and
" an honour and ornament to her sex and
" to the throne."

Portrait of the Queen by the Constituents.

My observations on Maria Antoinetta have been communicated to several of the conſtituents.

" You have mutilated the house of the
" king in 1789," said I to them, " and you
" obliged the court to disperse the troops
" it had assembled in the *Champ de Mars.*
" Authority was thus ravished from the
" house of Bourbon, and divided between
" your committees, the mayoralty, and La
" Fayette. The people of the suburbs and
" the national guards of Paris were the
" support of that reign of anarchy, un-

"equalled in modern times or in past
"ages. You could not have succeeded
"in so many things without surpassing the
"bounds of truth in regard to the queen.
"The royal family, detained by you at
"the Tuilleries, were exposed to your in-
"sults, to those of your journals, your
"writings, and your clubs. The palace
"of the Tuilleries was only an anticham-
"ber to the prison of the temple. Let us
"efface from history the greatest part of
"the anecdotes and hateful expressions
"which proceeded from your mouths and
"writings against the queen under those
"circumstances. When that princess was
"in your custody, she could not defend
"herself. History becomes her last asy-
"lum. You have made her more interest-
"ing to posterity than the most celebrated
"consorts of the Cæsars."

"From the year 1789," replied the con-

stituents, " we united our cause to that
" of the people in the revolution, because
" Maria Antoinetta, on her part, had put
" herself at the head of the counter-revo-
" lutionists, who were the first to give us
" the example, before 1789, to despise
" her; with this difference, that they had
" denounced her to the nation, and tar-
" nished her honour, from jealousy of fa-
" vourites and great men of her creation;
" whilst we only continued their work for
" the advancement of liberty, which we
" imagined Frenchmen deserved. The
" queen only spoke of us by the appella-
" tion of her MADMEN: and she deter-
" mined to proscribe the leaders of the
" friends of the nation and liberty; she
" had delivered them over to the venge-
" ance of her friends and partisans; and
" an army was destined to disperse or can-
" nonade the national assembly in 1789.
" The nation and the revolution, from

" that time, had not more cruel enemies
" to contend with than Maria Antoinetta.
" We would have saved her from the fury
" of our successors; but we neither knew
" their power nor ferocity. We were
" anxious for a moderate liberty, worthy of
" the nation; slavery was not made for
" Frenchmen, or, at least, they could not
" long support its yoke; but we did not
" desire the ruin of the monarchy. The
" growing strength of the revolution was
" the consequence of ill combinations, and
" not the effect of our will. Have we not
" expiated our faults in falling into the power
" of the girondins, who continued the re-
" volution against the court, against the
" constitutional royalty, and against us. As
" to the character of the queen, it will be
" unjust if she be not represented to pos-
" terity as a woman abounding in vices
" and defects, and that it was necessary,
" without confessing it to the nations of

" Europe, to deprive her of her guard, " and confine her to the Tuilleries, under " the care of La Fayette, who was well- " intentioned. That measure appeared " necessary for the establishment of li- " berty during the existence of the na- " tional assembly, which gave us the first " constitution."

Such, in general, is the opinion of the constituents on Maria Antoinetta.

Portrait of the Queen by the Girondins of the Convention.

I communicated my remarks on Maria Antoinetta to some principal leaders of the girondins, with some observations on courtier and constitutional royalists, expressing myself as follows: " The term " of inexorable history commences with " you and with Maria Antoinetta, who

" fell under your barbarity at the dissolu-
" tion of the constituent assembly. The
" war between the court and those whom
" you termed the GREAT MEN OF THE
" KINGDOM, THE FEUILLANS, terminat-
" ed on the day or its closing; you con-
" tinued it until the *tenth of August*.
" Brissot obtained some jacobin ministers,
" by menacing the queen to denounce her
" as the author of the fabrication of false
" assignats; and the terrified court accept-
" ed them. Recovered from its terror, it
" discarded those ministers, and on the
" 20th of June you assembled the men
" from the suburbs round the palace; you
" abandoned to them the royal family, and
" they decorated the king with a red cap.
" The constituents had scandalised the
" queen in 1789; and you, to continue
" the scene, delivered her over, in 1792,
" to the actors of the *tenth of August*.
" Your armies met with some discomfi-

" tures, and the king and his consort ex-
" perienced the fate of Lally and Byng.
" Let us erase from history all that malice
" has falsely invented against Maria An-
" toinetta. What can you say in answer
" to those articles of her history we have
" just perused?"

" The *gironde* did not wish to imprison
" Maria Antoinetta," replied the two mem-
bers of the convention. " It assigned to
" her, as well as to her husband, the pa-
" lace of the Luxembourg, and after-
" wards that of the minister of justice.
" The *gironde*, which formed, after the
" 10th of August, the majority of the le-
" gislature, would have supported the de-
" cree of the conquerors of the Tuilleries,
" if they had not usurped the fatal in-
" fluence which made them masters of
" Paris and all France. The queen, how-
" ever, was the first author of her misfor-

"tunes. Her party, by their writings, by "their caricatures, and periodical committees, had threatened Bailly, La Fayette, "the Lameths, Barnave, and others, with "the scaffold. Under the legislature the "queen continued to caress exclusively the "people of the ancient *régime*, who, in their "ulterior writings, in the committees, and "in their caricatures, had devoted Fauchet, "Brissot, Petion, Manuel, Guadet, and "the other patriots of that series, to death. "The tenth of August was determined on "by the mutual fears of both parties: "and yet it was never our desire to destroy either Maria Antoinetta or her "husband. At the risk of our lives we "refused our votes to the factions of *la* "*Montagne* and *Orleans*, who had predetermined the ruin of the royal family. "The former, conducted by ferocious "men, might succeed, or it might fail. It "was prudent to keep in a versatile situa-

"tion between the two alternatives; as "was advised, particularly by Condorcet "de Vergniaux and other leaders of the "*gironde*, who have been punished for "their various opinions. As to the queen, "history can neither represent her as "a Brunehault nor a Frédégonde; but "as a woman composed of vices and "crimes."

Portrait of Maria Antoinetta by the Jacobins, with their Opinion of her.

For the completion of the tragedy it was requisite to sound the opinions of the party which conducted Maria Antoinetta to the temple and the scaffold. "You "see," said I to one or two, "the conse-"quence of your invectives against the "queen, and you at this time experience "the fatal effects of the events which "brought her to destruction. Were you

" proscribed during her influence? Ne-
" vertheless, after having compared her to
" Frédégonde and Brunehault; after hav-
" ing sought in antiquity for the most
" atrocious characters, to compare them
" with that princess, you led her to the
" scaffold. The revolutionary government
" still remained in your hands for the space
" of nine months; but at the moment you
" lost it, the royalists, the constituents,
" the girondins, and all the softened ja-
" cobins, declaimed against the sentence of
" Maria Antoinetta. They all consider-
" ed it a crime against the rights of so-
" ciety. At the present day, you alone
" remain responsible for an execution
" which at the time exposed France to
" the most dangerous intestine commo-
" tions, animated the foreign powers with
" more fury against us, and has since de-
" prived you of all influence in public
" affairs."

"If the *feuillans*," replied the jacobins, "had done justice to the queen when she "carried off Lewis XVI. in 1791, they "would have saved the *montagnards* the "trouble. Your observations do not prove "that the queen was not a Messalina, nor "a Frédégonde; they prove that the au-"thor of the work on Maria Antoinetta "is not a friend to the revolution; since "he blames the patriots who so justly con-"demned her to death."

We perceive, in these different opinions of the queen, a variety of shades. The remains of the ancient *régime*, which dishonoured her before the revolution, represent her as a heroine. The more moderate constituents, who gave her a comfortable prison at the Tuilleries, depict her as a woman fraught with defects and vices; the girondins, who delivered her up to their executioners, as a woman com-

posed of vices and crimes; and the jacobins as a Messalina, a Medicis, or a Brunehault. Under such circumstances the duty of an historian consists in arraigning, at their own tribunal, the royalists, the constituents, the girondins, and the montagnards, and judging them all in that style of independence and liberty which they themselves have exhibited in their different proceedings against that princess. I trust I have acquitted myself in that respect as a Frenchman, and as a just and impartial member of society.

If you attend even to the opinions of royalists, constituents, girondins, and jacobins, on Lewis XVI. Bailly, La Fayette, and Mirabeau, you will have as many characters as parties. Leave those parties to decide on the different forms of worship established in France, and the ancient institutions of the monarchy, the parliaments for instance,

and you would find the same division in things as well as in persons. Read a history of the constituents composed by a royalist of 1788, or by a constituent, girondin, or a montagnard; you would find contradictions and oppositions inconceivable in the art of writing the history of the same periods, the same places, the same persons, and the same revolution.

I acknowledge that the history of Lewis XVI. which I am publishing is among the number of the works which the silent, but not annihilated, factions ought to blame and proscribe. The commencement of it, adapted to temper the abuses of the ancient government, before the revolution, and written with that view, appears to be published at the present day with an intention of blaming the revolution. What method can be adopted to please, at the same time, the authors of its crimes, pos-

terity who shudders at them, and the European powers who behold them with horror? Historical truth is hence doomed by nature, like an equitable sentence, founded on eternal evidence, to become the sport of the unjust party that it condemns. In such a situation, an absolute and sovereign independence of every faction is the surest and most noble part an historian can take. He ought not to be the panegyrist, but the inexorable judge, of factions. Superior to the opinions of times and places, he must never depart from eternal and invariable justice, if he would merit the esteem of the friends of truth, that of posterity who will judge us, and that of Europe, now silently attentive to our labours.

Besides the desire of being candid and independent, I confess that I am anxious to be useful. The rising generation, some of those who direct it, and the generality

of men who have been raised by the revolution, are ignorant of the history of the ancient government; they do not always consider, that our enemies, with institutions analogous to those we have overturned, have resisted our opinions, our excesses, and our systems, offensive and defensive. When the revolution loses its influence, it becomes necessary for the French government to know and adopt the abolished customs which may assist its authority. The consulate have the same people to govern, the same religions to respect, and many ancient laws and natural opinions, which seem attached to our soil, to conduct; more extensive frontiers to defend; two opposite ancient diplomatic systems to contrive; the influence of England on the system of our finances to study and remove; all the measures of ancient France to give the nation her due consideration in Europe to digest; our ancient policy of

protecting subaltern powers to weigh; and all the methods which the house of Bourbon adopted, to render itself important in Europe, and enforce respect, to call to their aid. They ought to be acquainted, above all, with the causes that contributed to destroy a monarchy which had endured for fourteen ages, in order to preserve a government newly established.

The revolution has besides produced an effect little known, and very uncommon, which the self-love of the present generation will not permit them to acknowledge, but which they must be told of. The French are now ignorant of many essential and useful things, formerly preserved by ancient customs.

Deprived of historical documents, the rising generation will know less of the ad-

ministration, manners, and customs, of the last years of the monarchy, than of those of the reign of Lewis XIV.; because the communication between ancient and modern times has been interrupted so much, that the revolution has left an abyss between them.

The richest and most enlightened class of Frenchmen alone instructed the mass of the nation, and regulated every thing; another class, not so opulent, but better informed, who composed the offices of the different administrations, and exclusively possessed extensive knowledge, are now no more. The revolution and the emigration it occasioned have despoiled the former class: they possessed nearly two thirds of the landed property of France; they had received the ancient education; and communicated knowledge to the mass of the nation by means of the arts, by their necessities, their

habits, and their sociability of manners. A generation, more bold than enlightened, have inherited their fortunes, and the chain of social instruction has been broken. It was again so at the time of the impoverishment of the second class. We have witnessed therefore the dissolution of the courts, the fall of the universities, colleges, academies, and of twenty thousand pastors, who had received the ancient ecclesiastical education, and studied in the institutions which established the thirty treatises of morality taught therein. The French who occupied those posts and employments, have ceded them to a hundred thousand children of the revolution. These are the principal causes of the ignorance we observe in the present age. The most enlightened part of France, at present, is not the most rich. The ancient sources of knowledge are dried up. A great number of the administration, creatures of the

revolution, entertain opinions dangerous to the administration. This misfortune was one of the principal causes of the fall of the variety of governments which, since 1792, have desolated France; for instead of ruling the nation, they revolutionised it. The general instructions of the state are at present protecting in their nature, and very different from the revolutionary, directorial, thermidorian, montagnard, and even girondin spirit. Hence it derives its preservation from the present state of its knowledge. If it should change its maxims, that event, united to other causes, would overthrow it, like a directorial or montagnard government. For its utility, and for the present generation, I have published my historical works of the last years of ancient France; I have endeavoured to preserve a picture of the manners, customs, prejudices, and administration of the monarchy before its fall; be-

cause the French of the present day have still occasion for a knowledge of former ages; the rising generation are anxious to acquire information. If you wish for proofs of this truth, go to the national library, and you will be convinced. You will there find the reading-desks crowded with young men from twenty to thirty years of age, whose contemplative attitudes indicate with what zeal they are animated. Under the ancient *régime*, a single room was hardly filled twice a-week. Now, all the rooms together are insufficient.

Besides the desire of publishing instructive anecdotes on the ancient government, I have had a more general intention; that of serving humanity. The French revolution is not only the scourge of population, but also that of happiness and interior peace, which the different Euro-

pean nations still enjoy. As a proof that this observation is just, all the nations established around our revolutionary dissensions, with the exception of those our troops have stirred up to rebellion, have been peaceable observers of our strange operations. With abuses perhaps more glaring than those of the ancient monarchy, they have resisted all our unjust insinuations and promises. They have made conquests equivalent to ours. Who is there amongst us that did not express his desire, in 1789, for their political restoration? and which of us now does not desire that they may enjoy repose and tranquillity? None of them are without royalists of 1788, fanatic partisans of authority. None of them are without constituents, ambitious of sharing the royal power, under pretence of reform. None of them are without Brissotins or revolutionary adventurers, susceptible of every

change of temper, to create an ephemeral government. None of them are without robust montagnards, who would govern them with torches and poniards in their hands. None are without the same elements of revolution; and as a proof that these factions are primitive, and inseparable from human nature in revolution, the changes in Helvetia, Piedmont, and Holland, have developed analogous dispositions under different denominations.

In publishing this history, which is intended as a continuation of the *Memoirs of Richlieu*, it is my intention to point out to every state the revolutionary seeds and combustible materials they each contain. Modern societies being all formed in the same mould; instead of professing a spirit of combination against their rulers, which our deceived revolutionists have imbibed from the English, I

would say to them all, "You enjoy tran-
"quillity, your people may speculate in
"trade; the learning of the nineteenth
"century flourishes among you; be aware
"of the severe and dangerous austerity of
"your Turgots; their manners, strange to
"your institutions and to your generation,
"would be the scourge of your present
"state of civilisation. If you have any
"zealous reformers, keep them out of your
"administrations. Be guarded against the
"restless reforming ambition of the Neck-
"ers of your day, against the introduc-
"tion of their systems into your govern-
"ment, and above all, against the opera-
"tions of adventurers, entirely strange to
"the intent and meaning of your laws
"and social establishments. Never let
"it depart from your remembrance, that
"the worst abuse is that of daring,
"like our Genevese minister, to reform
"and destroy without reason or measure,

" even the vices of your administration.
" Behold the situation of France: it is
" nothing but ruins; every thing is to be
" recreated and rebuilt. After the massacre
" or frightful and unheard-of proscription
" of more than a million of citizens, the art
" of governing in it is becoming the only
" difficult one. In the course of the last
" ten years we have had but one individual,
" one successful man, in the midst of our
" intestine dissensions: he alone has been
" able to stop proscription and confiscation
" of property, dry up the streams of blood
" of our fellow-citizens, and put us in
" possession of that liberty we have sought
" in the midst of darkness for these last
" ten years. Is not the publication of my
" book an instrumental proof of it? Re-
" member Mazarin, Law, and Necker, in
" France; and Ripera in Spain."

I shall now give an account of the

sources from which I have derived my information. It may be considered, in the first place, as a continuation of my labours on the history of the decline of the French monarchy, published in nine volumes, under the title of *Memoirs of Marshal Richlieu*, which commence at the latter part of the reign of Louis XV., and end at the accession of Louis XVI. to the throne. These memoirs, and those I am now publishing, are the result of indefatigable researches, ever since the year 1778. The most distinguished personages of ancient France have supplied me with the anecdotes and other curious materials, that have gone through two editions in the first of the works. I have frequented persons respectable for their talents and veracity, who were brought up in the court of Lewis XIV.; such as marshal Richlieu, cardinal Luynes, some ancient magistrates and ministers, confidential secretaries, sabaltern

agents of government, valets-de-chambres to the king, ancient favourites, and ladies of the court. All of them were still able to give clear and particular accounts of the events and persons mentioned in the Memoirs of Richlieu. I have preserved from the flames of the revolution, the most curious monuments of our modern history, by publishing before the epoch of our misfortunes, the complete works of the duke de Saint-Simon *, memoirs of Duclos, Massillon, Maurepas, d'Aiguillon, and others connected with the history of Lewis XV.

During the reign of the unfortunate Louis XVI., I did not discontinue my visits amongst people of the first distinction in the monarchy. Above all, I collected the monuments of the arts; my cabinet con-

* In thirteen volumes 8vo. printed for Treuttel and Würtz, at Paris and Strasbourg.

tains all the historical engravings of that period, and all that I could possibly find relating to anterior transactions.

The execution of this project has formed a collection of prints, composed of an hundred and sixty-two volumes in folio, on the history of our nation, from the time of Pharamond, to that of Bonaparte; a monument truly national, since it is an history of France written by the imagination of our artists, as well as the history of modern Europe, with which France has ever been connected *.

* To establish a methodical order in such a voluminous collection of plates, I have divided them into epochs and ages, relative to the different situations of France and Europe, thus:

1st. The conquest and establishment of the Francs.

2d. The ages of ignorance; their manners and institutions.

3d. The feudal government, chivalry, &c.

4th. The crusades.

5th. The discovery of the new world, and the establishment of Europeans in America.

6th. The revolution of Luther and Calvin.

7th. The reign of Lewis XVI., forerunner of the revolution.

To this assemblage, I have added another, no less important, that of printed

8th. The French revolution, and the institution of new republics.

9th. The consulate.

These divisions are subdivided into reigns, in chronological order; and each reign divided into sections.

The first section of each reign contains the portraits of the king and queen, their children, and the princes of the blood.

The second contains the portraits of contemporary princes, whether allies, neutral, or enemies.

The third is composed of portraits of illustrious men of each reign, in either the administration, army or navy, law, church, literature, or arts.

The fourth contains the wars, campaigns, sieges, anecdotes, and revolutions, of each reign.

The fifth is composed of the revolutions or events in Europe: also plates of the revolutions of England, the Low-countries, Switzerland, and America: movements indicative of that we are now under, are selected with particular care.

The sixth contains monuments of architecture, tombs, and mausoleums, monies, medals, and seals, of each reign.

This work is thus: First, THE HISTORY OF THE ART OF DRAWING; because the historical monuments of each age may be found therein; as church-windows, sculptured mausoleums, and other productions of the art of drawing in the different ages.

2d. It is THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE; because public monuments and edifices, from the magnificent antiquities of Nismes, for instance, built under the Romans, down to the edifice of the French Pantheon, finished under Lewis XVI. In this series of public buildings we observe the art of architecture pass from the sublime age under the Romans, towards the barbarous and *mauresque* of the first and second

works, on the reign of Lewis XVI., and on the revolution; which are also in my

race, towards the gothic age, and towards the regular architecture of the reign of Lewis XIV. which produced the colonade of the Louvre, the Pantheon, &c.

3d. This work is also especially THE HISTORY OF ENGRAVING, a new art, contemporary with printing, the history of which will be found herein in an instrumental manner, handing down to posterity its different stages, from its infancy to the time of its arriving to perfection; together with the art of engraving on wood, and the first delicate performances on copper, in the early stage of the art under Henry IV; its vigorous productions under Lewis XIV; the refined taste which distinguished it under Lewis XV.; and that variety of subaltern style practised at present by our artists, which threatens us with degeneracy, if we ever lose sight of the manner of Moreau, Ponce, Tardieu, Godefroy, Wille, and others of that description.

4th. This work is also, in effect, THE HISTORY OF FRENCH SCULPTURE. This revolution has destroyed the most ancient abbeys, castles, and the greatest part of the public monuments of feudal times. It has destroyed edifices as ancient as the French monarchy itself. The genius of Frenchmen, in their different ages, was imprinted on those monuments, now no more: we have witnessed the ferocity the barbarians, who, in their revolutionary infatuation, have demolished the mausoleums, the equestrian statues of kings, and the most beautiful remains of French antiquity. Those productions of art were the justificatory and instrumental documents of our history, and that of the arts. In the space of eight days we may have studied that history at Paris, and have touched, as it were, the infant productions of genius, in the barbarous and gothic ages. We might have observed its gradual progress towards the age of sublimity, under the last kings of the race of Valois,

cabinet. It will hardly be believed that they consist of more than thirty thousand different publications, written by the leaders of factions, or by their disciples and ad-

and afterwards under the reigns of the Bourbons (1). The greatest part of the productions of the genius of Frenchmen are annihilated: they were still to be found in engravings before the year 1789; but terrors and revolutions have destroyed the plates, burned and mutilated the impressions; and I have been extremely fortunate in saving, in the midst of revolutionary fury, at the risk of my life, a collection, which the degradation or ruin of antiquities renders so valuable.

In short, each reign terminating by engravings which represent monuments of architecture, painting, and sculpture, of that time, the work is A COMPLETE HISTORY OF ART IN FRANCE, in its different ramifications, and in its barbarous, *mauresque*, gothic, and sublime stages.

Employed in this great undertaking for several years before the fall of the monarchy, I did not expect that it would have terminated with the sanguinary representations of different scenes of the revolution. The reign of Lewis XVI., with the revolution, compose 34 volumes in folio, 22 of which relate to the latter.

I shall terminate this note by observing, that the engravings relative to the campaigns and administration of Bonaparte, already compose 3 volumes in folio, at the time of the printing of this preface, the 15th Fructidor, year 9. (September 1, 1800.)

(1) Posterity is indebted to the zeal of Citizen Lenoir for the preservation of the greatest part of these monuments, which he has saved from the destructive fury of the revolution: he has classed them in chronological order.

herents *. So that in writing the history of the revolution, we are embarrassed in

* I have divided them thus: First, into works preparatory to, and indicative of, the revolution: 2. general histories of the revolution: 3. writings on exterior relations: 4. writings on the colonies: 5. works of conspicuous revolutionists, such as Necker, Bailly, Mounier, Lally, Bergasse, Rivarol, Choiseul, d'Antraigues, Mirabeau, Maury, Villette, Condorcet, Cloots, Cérutti, Sieyes, Rolland, Péthion, Brissot, Marat, Robespierre, and others: 6. journals of declared revolutionists, and counter-revolutionists; *The Friend of the King*, by Royou; *The friend of the People*, by Marat, Gorsas, Brissot, Carra, and Camille Desmoulins: 7. All the distributions of the constituents, conventionalists, and jacobins: 8. chronological history of every year, from 1787: 9. fugitive pieces and distributions of the feuillans-jacobins, the girondin-jacobins, and the montagnard-jacobins: 10. writings on Lewis XVI., the house of Bourbon and Orleans: 11. history of the convention under the majority of the *gironde*, the *montagne*, and under the thermidorian coalition: 12. history of the directory and consulate. All these works are classed nearly like the *mechanical picture of the revolution*, which may be found in the sixth volume. The table of contents, of each volume, form a summary history of the French revolution; and the collection is so much the more valuable, as it is still complete, although the constituents burnt, on the 10th of August, every production anterior to that epoch. On the 31st of May they destroyed the works of the *girondins*; and on the 10th Thermidor those of the Montagnards. The collection of Marat, a monument of the extreme faction of the revolution, costs in the shops 600 livres. Besides, I do not think there exists any other complete copy of the *Publiciste*; an important work, which, since 1789, has furnished some extremely valuable materials.

the choice of materials. We are obliged to confine ourselves to select the writings of the most remarkable personages of each party, as they contain the quintessence of the anarchy of the moment we have to delineate, and also the spirit of opposition which moved the rulers, whom contests we must describe.

Some documents much more important than engravings and writings, have been communicated to me for the composition of the *Memoirs of the Reign of Lewis XVI.* At the time the palace of the Tuilleries was stormed by the people, a bundle of papers, which the king had preserved, on the period of his reign anterior to the revolution, was taken to the *committee of inspection* in the evening of the TENTH OF AUGUST. We must not confound this part of his papers, with those which he caused to be

inclosed in an iron press concealed in a wall; for they only related to the revolution, whilst the former regarded the administration and history of the ancient *régime*; which were by no means interesting to the revolutionists at that time in office, but are of great importance to our history. The circumstance being favourable, to gain a sight of them, I applied to Chabot whom I had known from his infancy.

This man, the principal revolutionist of the time, and one of the chiefs of the cordeliers and jacobins, and of the committee of inspection, was able, by a single word, to determine the committee to permit or refuse the examination of the documents. He was indebted for his great influence to the boldness of his revolutionary conceptions, to the fanaticism of his expressions, and to the daring

orders he had given in person for the success of the conspiracy of the *tenth of August*. It is said, that he made a curious offering, which the girondins, jealous of the montagnards, have since wished to attribute to themselves: I mean the *offering of his skin to the nation, to make a drum-head*, by the sound of which he would inspire the spirit of the revolution into the moderate Parisians, who already gaped and yawned while talking of insurrection. Asking Chabot for the secret anecdotes of the tenth of August, I attracted his attention; but when I expressed a desire to make some extracts from the king's papers, which the people had brought from the Tuilleries to the committee, we fell into a curious dialogue on the spirit and affairs of the times, which I judged worth preserving.

SOULAVIE. Since the period when au-

thors first begun to write history, they have never had an opportunity of drawing their information from so authentic a source as is now open. The king's papers must develope every secret cause of the events of his reign. You know, Chabot, the importance of a work of this nature: what will the revolution be to our descendants, if we deprive them of the historical knowledge of what preceded it? I wish therefore to see the king's papers anterior to the revolution, in regular order.

CHABOT. *The king's papers!* The request does not announce any great talent for writing history. You are not even in the right road. Speak the language of revolutionists, and they will assist your labours. The person you call a *king*, we term a *tyrant*. Have you asked any one else belonging to the committee?

SOULAVIE. Fauchet and Rovère have both promised me. Basire referred me to you; you heard him.

CHABOT. But if we permit you to extract the documents you desire, what security have we, that you will not prefer those which favour the opinions of Capet, without taking notice of the rest? Instead of representing him as a monster, a tyrant, you will, perhaps, condemn those who have dethroned and imprisoned him, and are resolved to have his head; you will judge his judges. This is what they will say of your undertaking in the committee, when I speak in your behalf.

SOULAVIE. If that be your opinion of me, keep your papers; if it be not, I will accept the favour you do me, only on condition that you tell me what you really think of my intentions.

CHABOT. My opinion is, that you will find something about Turgot, Necker, and Malesherbes, in those rascally papers; and that they will influence you in favour of Capet, like a member of our committee, whom we found crying like a fool over one of his sister Elizabeth's letters to him. Write that anecdote. Is there not something in the majesty of our revolution, in the insurrection of the people, and in their brilliant triumph over the crowned *ogres* who devoured them, to render history more eloquent, interesting, and curious, than the miserable intrigues of a court which you wish to examine? Remember, your works will be your ruin, that is certain, if you commiserate Capet. You know how we treat the Cazottes and Durosois. An excellent lesson for historians and men of letters!

SOULAVIE. I shall either write the

truth, or nothing at all. But, that I may receive some gratification from this interview, tell me what you have in agitation at this moment.

CHABOT. We are most cruelly embarrassed. The Germans are coming; and they intend to hang us and rescue the tyrant: and, on our part, we intend to hang the tyrant, defeat the Germans, seize their kings, bring them to the bar, exact homage to the sovereignty of the French people, keep them prisoners, and demand a considerable ransom to be distributed amongst our brother *sans-culottes*, heroes of the *tenth of August*; after which we shall bring Capet to trial.

SOULAVIE. These, certainly, are great events: but is every thing in accord for their execution?

CHABOT. We have the aristocrats safe

in the Abbey. Brissot and the *gironde* have deserted us, it is true, and give us a great deal of uneasiness. When we are employed in revolutionising, these camelions, these paltry amphibious animals, withdraw themselves: when we wished the forfeiture to be voted, they wayed and perplexed the legislative assembly, IN WHICH AT PRESENT NOT A DOZEN PATRIOTS ARE TO BE FOUND, because the feuillans as well as the girondins have sold themselves; whilst we, with our patriotism, honesty, and poverty, have only a few among us who are accustomed to the rostrum, and the mass of jacobins, who have many false brethren among them.

SOULAVIE. But you have plenty of cordeliers.

CHABOT. Cordeliers! why since they directed the tenth of August, at the head of the

Marseillese, they are dissolved; one would suppose they only wished for places; for now, that they are become rich, and have FEATHERED THEIR NESTS, they grow *aristocrats.* I begin to think that Marat is the only genius of the revolution; however, we shall soon put him to the proof; he shall be a deputy; and if he become rich, I will renounce all faith in virtue, and put an end to my existence; I will no longer live in the midst of such abominable depravity.

SOULAVIE. Your sincerity, Chabot, draws tears of pity for the fate of our country, and for the convention now forming. Have you forgot the unanimity of sentiment displayed on the 14th July, 1789, when every Frenchman declared himself independent of the ancient authority? If the first revolutionary constituents were aristocrats in the eyes of the party of La-

meth; if Lameth and the revisers appeared so to the party killed in the *Champ-de-Mars*; if the feuillans are become so in the opinion of the montagnards of the second legislature; if the brissotins appear to the cordeliers to be aristocrats, and if now the cordeliers become so in the opinion of Chabot, and a dozen true patriots; if French patriotism be reduced to that number, whilst the mass of Frenchmen remain aristocrats; recollect that this mass will refuse the imposts, patriotic gifts, and every kind of submission to the patriotism of the twelve; that if it were possible for these twelve to take the government into their hands, I will venture to affirm, that in the course of three months' administration, the twelve patriots would be reduced to one.

CHABOT. Without being able to arrange all this like yourself, I have long

since been convinced of its truth; and I have often cursed my fate, and regretted my former situation. I know very well that our lives are in danger; but we will be beforehand with them. Our enemies, and all the aristocratic families, had better submit; or else we may exterminate them. *Submission or extermination!* this in future shall be the motto of government; in other words, *live free or die.*

SOULAVIE. *Submit!* The French are no longer as they were formerly. Have not you made and constituted them all sovereigns? and are not all the aristocratic factions of feuillans and brissotins enemies of the twelve patriots, who alone deserve, as you say, to govern France, in the class of sovereigns? The sovereign people in France, therefore, is at variance with the twelve, and to this twelve you talk of making the sovereign submit. To *submit*

or be exterminated is a very different thing. Recollect that we agreed just now, that the sovereign was a mass composed of aristocrats, feuillans, and brissotins: recollect well, Chabot, the twelve cannot exterminate that mass; but may be exterminated by them. Do you not already discover the effects of the second of September, when the leaders thought of ruling by murder? but the opposition of the mass rises anew against this proceeding.

CHABOT. Your observations would make me mad, and cause me to be false and hypocritical; for I have resolved to live and die a patriot, and even in the most distinguished class. But what if we propose an oath of submission to those people?

SOULAVIE. It would be inconsistent with the oath of liberty and equality, which

I believe was decreed on your own proposal. An oath, my dear Chabot, is like a constitution; it is either a farce or a religious sentiment. In the course of three years you have taken, or seen taken by Frenchmen, the oath of fidelity to the king before 1789, that of fidelity to the law and to the king in 1790, and that of liberty and equality in 1792. Your last oath destroyed the gradation which nature has imprinted on all societies. In Europe, as well as among all the barbarous tribes of Africa, you will find something equivalent to the titles of *my lord*, *sir*, &c. In France you have done away the name; but the revolution, by destroying the word, has strengthened the distinction and the reality. Tell me, Chabot, by virtue of what law could the committee send me to the Abbey, as you tell me, to punish me for my opinions? Would you wish me to write, that you tyrannize over

my thoughts, and take advantage of the ephemeral power, which my suffrage has contributed to give you, to invest yourself with a sovereign control of my liberty.

CHABOT. Your ideas destroy all received opinions. Presently, we shall have you proposing the ancient *régime*.

SOULAVIE. An honest man must ever detest the vices of that *régime*, but I would propose any thing that was absolutely necessary for the existence of a great state. I have taken, as well as you, the oath of liberty and equality, and I have ridiculed your decree. If you wish to hear what I said, attend to me. The omnipotence of the monarchy covered with its ægis the order of capuchins; and nevertheless, the mass of that order, to exist in society, and attain to the execution of its regulations,

stood in need of superiors to govern it, and mendicants for its support. Your oath has inverted the natural order of society.

CHABOT. Your observations are, perhaps, true; but what can we do? we are so situated as to be obliged to persevere, or perish. We have no resource but in our cannon. I have promised you the inspection of the papers; you shall be gratified. Adieu! But I should wish to see you once a-fortnight, to have a similar conversation on our strange proceedings.

The abbé Fauchet and Rovère having been in my favour at the meeting of the committee, and Chabot having assured them that I was a good sort of a man, they allowed me to copy, analyse, and make the

desired extracts. I collected some curious facts on the declaration of war, on the campaign of Frederic-William; on the prison of the temple; on the second of September; on Montmorin, ex-minister for foreign affairs, who was brought to the committee, and left alone with me for the space of three hours; on the declaration of the republic; and on Orleans, sent for to the committee on account of some revolutionary measures. These notes, throwing a new light on the history of the revolution, are contained in my memoirs not yet printed.

When I had been employed at the committee a few days, Chabot came, and sitting down beside me, addressed me as follows: "I was very right in my conjectures that you would cause me some uneasiness. Buisson is now printing *memoirs in defence of the ancient régime*. They have been told this at the committee; and I have

engaged to inquire into the particulars, and inform them thereof.

SOULAVIE. I have done nothing wrong.

CHABOT. Done nothing wrong! At the hazard of our lives we organised the *tenth of August* against the tyrant, whom you declare an honest man! We curse him, and you adore him! We organised the revolution of the tenth against his depredations; and you throw the blame on his courtiers.

SOULAVIE. I still have not erred on that score; for you have supplied me with documents belonging to the committee, which prove the dilapidations of the court, and the avarice of the king.

CHABOT. You have not erred! Or

must I be deceived; that is to say, you must cancel your assertions, or see the committee enraged at both of us, and perhaps.... This cancel must be made; and say of Capet, not that he was an honest man, but that he was what he is still, a tiger or a tyrant. You must say, that if the people honoured the king when he was popular, they despised and hooted him on the 6th of October, at his return from Varennes, and at his entrance into the Temple, which he will never leave but to ascend the scaffold. Without this I cannot appease Bazire. He may sign a warrant to apprehend you, which I must sanction as well as another.

Having my pockets full of proof sheets of the *Memoirs of Richelieu*, which they were then printing, Chabot, after reading about a quarter of an hour, at length found, in effect, that I spoke of Lewis XVI. as an

honest man. *This is what you promised me, then!* said he. Have they not reason to accuse me in the committee of supporting one of Capet's panegyrists *?

I replied, that he himself thought the same of Lewis XVI., when the commencement of the work was given to the printers: and added, you may do what you please; but I will never obliterate, that the king was an honest man; because I thought him so. I will promise you, however, to put an explanatory erratum at the end of the eleventh volume; but with the date of the imprint, at the end of December, 1792.

* This is the passage: "Every one must know, that "the depravity of manners under Lewis XVI., and "the wild dissipations we have had cause to lament "under the just monarch we adore, have for ever de-"prived the house of Bourbon of the arbitrary power, "which the French, a loyal and generous people, had "left in the hands of their princes." (*Memoirs of Richelieu*, second edition, page 42, vol. I. Paris, 1793, printed by Buisson.)

CHABOT. Draw a copy of it *.

We drew up this explanatory note together, and I then made all haste to complete my dangerous undertaking, by continuing it at the Tuilleries, when Rolland, minister of the interior, had ordered an inventory to be taken of the king's most valuable papers, which had been found concealed in cases. I afterwards obtained

* Extract of the note from *Memoirs of Richelieu*, vol. IX. page 505, Paris, printed by Buisson, 1793.

"The praise given to Lewis XVI. of being an honest man, may be reconciled with his imprisonment, by comparing the date of the first volume and the ninth. Lewis XVI. has only lost by degrees his reputation, and the sentiments we entertained for him. The appellation of an honest man was bestowed on the king by the people when he doubled the representation of the commons, and when he granted the states. The people have since lost that sentiment in proportion as the king has refused to follow the revolution. Recollect, that he came in his coach to the town-hall, in the month of July, 1789, and the assembly followed him on foot; that he was sumptuously entertained on his return, and proclaimed, a few days afterward, Restorer of the Liberty of the French; whilst on his second journey, in the month of October, the people, again deceived, treated him with derision. On his third journey, returning from Varennes, the indignant people looked upon him with scorn and contempt. In his fourth, on his way to the Temple, he was hooted and spit at. What will be the last act of this tragedy?....."

leave from the executive council, to go into the king's private apartment at Versailles, for the purpose of finding something relative to his reign; and I begged that the clerks of the directory of the department, district, and municipality, might be present during my labours. Every one was now suspected, and as I feared the future pillage which took place, I wished not to incur censure. The municipality gave us two commissaries, and, as a conductor, the hideous Gamin, teacher of the art of making locks to Lewis XVI., who afterwards was such a traitor to his master and apprentice, as to accuse him before the convention *of having had an intention to poison him, to prevent any one from knowing*, said Gamin, *the secret of the iron press*, the door of which that workman affirmed he made, and put up.

Although the character of Lewis XVI.

does not require a refutation of so base an aspersion, which procured its fabricator a pension of 1200 livres from the convention, I cannot help observing, that it was impossible for the king to attempt to poison him at the Tuilleries after the iron press was made, as Gamin asserted. He had not made the least complaint in the month of April, 1793, when he was our conductor at Versailles, and when he took us to the secret place where the king had ordered him to conceal *the red book*, immediately after he had finished the *iron press* at the Tuilleries; whence it results, that the villain could not have been poiſoned at that place, when he had completed the *iron press*, because Lewis XVI., at that moment, confided to him the *red book* and several other papers, which he concealed from the queen, relating to *the house of Austria, to the affair of the necklace, to the venality of baron Thugut, &c.*; which

papers the prince, in his fright, wished to send away from the Tuilleries, and remove far from the scenes of the revolution, by entrusting them to the care of his locksmith.

The *Memoirs of the Reign of Lewis XVI.*, which I am publishing, have, therefore, been composed from a valuable source, the papers of the king himelf; from depositories to which the queen or ministers never had the least access: and I have availed myself of all the information that could be obtained from prints and books; and from the most distinguished and best informed persons of that reign, whose situations were most favourable for observation, and with whom I have had frequent conversations since 1778. The work will, besides, have the merit of being exposed to all the censures of my contemporaries, and to the contradiction of

the opposite parties I provoke. This contradiction will bring on explanations and detections, important to the history of our times and country.

The *Memoirs of Marshal Richelieu* commence with the 18th century, and end at the death of Lewis XV.

Those *of the Reign of Lewis XVI.* begin at the time of his marriage, in 1771, and finish at his death.

My History of the Revolution, now in the press, begins with the first assembly of the notables, and ends with the 18th century. This is the completion of the task I proposed to myself in 1778.

The first volume of the *Memoirs of Lewis XVI.* was put into the printer's hands in Brumaire, year ix, and the sixth volume was finished on the 30th of Fructidor, in the same year.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

CHAP. I.

State of France and Austria, before the Marriage of Lewis XVI. with Maria Antonietta of Austria—Political Sketch of the Aggrandizement of France under the Dynasty of the Bourbons, and the relative Decline of the House of Austria, extracted from the Papers of the Dauphin, preserved in the Port-folios of Lewis XVI.—This Sketch continued to the Marriage of Lewis XVI. by the Author of these Memoirs—Consequences of the Introduction of the political Principles of Austria into the Cabinet of the King of France, and of a French Opposition, averse to these foreign Politics—Consequences of the French political Principles in the royal Council, thwarted by an Austrian Opposition established in France—These two contradictory Situations of the French Cabinet are the two opposite Causes of the glorious or disastrous Reigns of the Kings of France—Historical Proofs of this Truth—Anti-Austrian Politics of Henry III.—Austrian and Spanish League against him—Anti-Austrian Government of Lewis XIII.—Opposition of the Queen Mother and the Queen Consort—Anti-Austrian Politics of Lewis XIV.—Silence and Submission of all Oppositions, and brilliant Conquests of the King from the Austrians—The House of Austria no longer reigns in Spain—It is succeeded by the Bourbons—Alliance of the Regent with the House of Austria—Opposition of the Spaniards, and their Conspiracy against him—Anti-Austrian Politics of the Court of Lewis XV. to

the Peace of 1748—The House of Austria no longer reigns in Naples: the Bourbons are its Successors there—Austria loses Lorraine and Silesia—Opposition of Madame de Pompadour's Party to the ancient Anti-Austrian System of the Cabinet—Revolution in the System pursued by the foreign Ambassadors in France—Treaty and Alliance offensive and defensive between France and Austria—Opposition of the Dauphin, Father to Lewis XVI.—Conclusion of the diplomatic Memoirs of the Dauphin—The same Observations continued—The King of Prussia secretly joins the Dauphin's Party against the Alliance of France with the Court of Vienna—Lewis XV. is assassinated—The Duke of Choiseul, become the Head of the Austrian Party, persuades Lewis XV. that this Blow was concerted between the Dauphin, the King of Prussia, and the Jesuits—Terror of Lewis XV.—Organization of the Austrian Party at the Court and in the Cabinet of Versailles—Portrait of the Duke of Choiseul—Portrait of the Duke of Aiguillon, his Enemy, and the secret Agent of the Dauphin, Father to Lewis XVI.—The Duke of Choiseul, by terrifying Lewis XV., induces him to throw himself into the Arms of the Court of Vienna—Second Treaty concluded by him with the House of Austria: he engages France to furnish Maria Theresa with Men and Money to dethrone Frederic II., whom France had assisted in 1741 to conquer Silesia.—Distraction of the Dauphin at this Treaty.

THE diplomatic system of France, preserved, like the sacred fire of the vestals, from Henry IV. to 1756, considered by all good Frenchmen and men of sound understanding as the true source of the foreign power and credit of the nation, was annihilated and forgotten three and thirty years before the French revolution.

To habituate the last kings of the house of Bourbon to opposite systems, the house of Aus-

tria first procured us the duke of Choiseul as minister of the foreign department. Afterwards it gave us Maria Antonietta, who appeared to be bestowed on France solely as the guardian of the late treaties and the new system of politics. In consequence, a memorable struggle between the ancient foreign policy of France and the Austrian scheme was established in the bosom of the court of Versailles, in the ministry, and even in the heart of France, which introduced disorder into the royal family and the inmost recesses of the court, which accelerated the tragic scenes of the French revolution, and brought the partisans of the two opposite systems alternately to the scaffold; as in ancient France it had alternately raised and exiled the ministers, who had ventured to call themselves the supporters of either.

Initiated into the secrets of the territorial policy of France by marshal Richlieu, the last party man of note under the ancient scheme of politics of the cardinal, his great uncle; employed in his cabinet for several years in the study of the manuscript memoirs of the cardinal, of marshal Richlieu, and of the duke of Aiguillon; it is a debt I owe my country, after the emigration or execution of so many Frenchmen, illustrious for their knowledge of our interests, to exhibit to the public the principles, wish, struggles, and projects of France, with

respect to the two opposite systems. It is time, particularly under a government, which seeks from every quarter the views and information that may be useful for the maintenance of our interests and power, to expose to the eyes of France and of Austria the sad consequences of their schemes, their errours, and their quarrels; and the absolute necessity for their changing the plan of their foreign connections, if they would not both incur the dangers of Rome and Carthage; since the course of their destiny has brought them to that point, at which those two republics arrived. To accomplish this object, I shall begin the history of Lewis XVI. and his consort with a sketch of this struggle.

The general relations between France and Maria Theresa, at the accession of Lewis XVI., were those of a power, that, after having for centuries regarded the house of Austria as an irreconcileable enemy, whom we ought to humble and reduce for our own security, had concluded in its favour the two treaties of 1756 and 1758.

From Henry IV. to the period of these treaties, France had never made a war or concluded a peace without taking from it a kingdom or a province, either for our own benefit or for the advantage of our allies. From Henry IV. to the treaty of 1756, France, firm in the plan of destruction which she had never relinquished,

and which she had resolved to pursue till her rival was reduced to a level with the other leading powers, had taken from the German or the Spanish branch of the house of Austria, Roussillon, Burgundy, Alsatia, Franche-Compté, Artois, Hainault, Cambresis, the kingdoms of Spain and Naples, Sicily, Lorraine, Barrois, &c. Austria was in such a state of decline with regard to France, that Maria Theresa, recently despoiled of Silesia by the king of Prussia, who attacked her on the north of her dominions, while France assailed her on the south, resolved to change the political principles of her council with respect to us; resolved to leave nothing unattempted, nothing undone in France, to effect there a similar change.

Hence our two treaties with Austria, which must not be confounded together, that of 1756, negotiated by the abbé Bernis, afterwards cardinal, and that of 1758, which was fabricated between the duke of Choiseul and the court of Vienna.

Both these treaties are in the eyes of all nations the disgrace of Lewis XV., who by them tied up his own hands, and thus allowed Maria Theresa to accomplish the most revolting ravages and dismemberments in the north of Europe, to the prejudice of our allies.

Thus, previous to these two treaties, France, with respect to the house of Austria, was in the

situation of a power always active and victorious, enjoying in Europe that high respect which it bestows only on strength and success; while the two treaties reduced her to the condition of a secondary power, armed by Austria in the seven-years-war to despoil the king of Prussia, our natural ally, for the advantage of Austria, our enemy. This alliance reduced us to the situation of passive lookers on, suffering the throats of our friends at Warsaw to be cut, at the time when the coalition of Maria Theresa, Frederic, and Catherine, annihilated Poland, and the most ancient of our friends.

As to the prior dismemberments of Austria to the advantage of France and her allies, the victories of France did not proceed without wiles of the most crafty sort being frequently employed by Austrian policy, to oppose the daring progress of her strength. These had frequently retarded, postponed, and perverted the plans of the Bourbons, so disastrous and humiliating to her. Aiming for centuries at the sovereignty of the world: availing herself of the influence of her archduchesses, who in France were frequently devoted to their own family, and through their means, and the temptation of gold and promotion, powerful in the art of corrupting our men in public offices, our cabinet, our ambassadors, our ministers, and our generals: having recourse to tricks of state to preserve herself from an

impending war, for which she was unprepared: knowing how to employ at Paris considerable sums to organise oppositions to the system, which thus for centuries frittered away her possessions: she had at all times, except during the reign of Lewis XIV., when he governed for himself, the art of occupying our cabinet with domestic quarrels, and of making diversions beneficial to her interests.

On the part of France, a violent and profound animosity towards Austria had always prevailed during the whole dynasty of the Bourbons. No sooner did the French behold an Austrian princess with favourites of her own established at the head of the government, but their impatience of a foreign yoke ever prepared some great event. The struggle of an Austrian party, introduced into the French government and thwarted by a French opposition, or the struggle of a government, guided by French principles and thwarted by the opposition of an Austrian party, is a spectacle so new, and so little known; ancient France herself maintained such great reserve on this subject; crowned heads gave one another such strange blows; and their interests with respect to the people obliged them to use such precautions; that the time is come to expose in brief both the secret causes of the increase of territorial power, which the monarchy left for the republic, and the ob-

stacles which the house of Austria opposed, even in the vitals of the government, to that aggrandisement.

In this sketch we shall go back to the period, when the house of Bourbon began to pursue a system of politics in opposition to the senseless projects of Philip II. On the one hand, we shall see France rising gradually, and taking to herself the natural boundaries of the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenées; while on the other we see Austria declining in a proportionate degree, down to the treaty of 1756.

§ I. *Anti-Austrian Politics of Henry III.—Austrian League against him in France; which causes him to be assassinated.*

PHILIP II. had conceived the design of composing out of his own dominions, and those of France, England, &c., what he called his *christian monarchy*. With a view to commence this grand conquest, he put himself at the head of the armed league, which he formed against France. A monk, sent from the bosom of this league, assassinated Henry III. The leaguers then directed their fury against Henry IV. his successor.

Of the Anti-Austrian Government of Henry IV.—The Opposition of the Austrian League continued—First Period of the Decline of the Austrian Family established in Spain—Fall of the League, and Peace of Vervins.

PHILIP II., unable to obtain the crown, kept the leaguers in pay in favour of his daughter: but the victories of Henry IV. disconcerting the faction, this protestant prince disarmed the foreign and domestic catholic league by his conversion. If, to soften Rome, united with Austria against him, he allowed his ambassadors to humble themselves and receive the discipline on their knees before the Pope; he declared war against Spanish Austria, which had stirred up all those factions against him in France. After his life had been thrice attempted by assassins of the Austrian league, he fell at last by their hands; the blow being guided by the intrigues of his wife, who was descended from an Austrian mother, and a daughter of the house of Medici, at that time sold to the court of Vienna. By this assassination the queen disconcerted the plan of a counter-league against the court of Vienna, which Henry had conceived. Such at least is the opinion delivered in a very circumstantial memoir preserved among the king's papers, which throws new light on one of the most difficult problems of history, relative to the assas-

sination committed by Ravaillac. The sentiments of the Austrian courts of Madrid and Vienna were nearly the same with regard to France. Spain was the support of the court of Vienna, our rival in all ages; and the court of Vienna was the support of that of Madrid. These two courts, frequently of contrary sentiments, agreed only in the opposition of their interests to those of France.

The treaty of Vervins, concluded by Henry IV., is the first period of the decline of the Spanish house of Austria. Thenceforward its plans of offence against France were obliged to be exchanged for the defensive system. It was found in the papers of Philip II. that the armed opposition, embodied by him in France, had cost him 514 millions of gold.

§ III. *Regency and Austrian Principles of Mary de Medicis, Widow of Henry IV.—Armed Opposition of the Duke of Rohan, the Princes of the Blood, the great Men of the State, and the Parliament, against her Power and Politics.*

HENRY IV. in his design of a league against Austria, formed of England, Denmark, Savoy, the protestant princes of Germany, Venice, &c., was the first who conceived a plan of policy and judicious combination of alliances against that hostile power. But on his death, the principles of his widow were so much the reverse, that she

obliged Philibert, the eldest son of the duke of Savoy, to demand pardon on his knees of the king of Spain for his late engagements, which he had already entered into with Henry IV. against Austria. She dismissed Sully, who had assisted in this Anti-Austrian scheme; drained the treasury; married her daughter to the king of Spain; and gave Lewis XIII. Anne of Austria to wife. This was neutralising the offensive and defensive plans of her husband. All the late court of Henry IV. arose against her with arms in hand. It was necessary to banish her in the reign of her son, when it was resolved in council to resume the politics of Henry IV.

§ IV. *Anti-Austrian Government of Lewis XIII., or rather of the Cardinals Richlieu and Mazarin—Opposition of Mary de Medicis, Widow of Henry IV.—Second Period of the Decline of the House of Austria—War of Thirty Years against it, and Treaty of Westphalia.*

The profound Richlieu, who prosecuted and improved upon the plan of Henry IV., Richlieu, the scourge of Austria, resumed the design that Henry IV. had projected. Subsidising the protestants of Germany, who were inimical to the Austrian power; united with Sweden, who was then in the north of Europe what Prussia is now; leagued with the protestant princes of the empire; an opponent of the catholicism of the

Austrians; he had the courage to adopt Henry's schemes. By that day, which has been named the *day of dupes*, he overthrew his enemies at home, and disconcerted the opposition of the two queens. He obliged the queen dowager to take refuge in her Austrian estates, where he left her to die of grief; and dreading foreign intrigues in the person of the queen consort, he contrived to make her hated by the king. He declared war against Spain: he suppressed by force the domestic factions, which that power was preparing anew to exasperate and corrupt: he levied five armies, and left to Mazarin the office of maintaining so vast a design. The peace of Westphalia was its result after thirty years of war. This secured to France, Alsatia, the Three Bishoprics, &c. France became the protector of the liberties of the Germanic states; a species of influence or supreme authority, which the proud house of Brandenburg now enjoys through its success, its genius, and its boldness. We have lost that distinguished influence over the protestant party in Germany, and Frederic succeeded us in it. Our most fanatical kings, our cardinal ministers most devoted to religion, even Fleury himself, renounced all their religious prejudices, to keep up that connection of natural interests which united two extremes, by a constant friendship with the protestant princes. A court that displayed the rage of fanaticism against the

protestants in France, was their protector in Germany.

§ V. *Anti-Austrian Principles of the Government of Lewis XIV. —The Austrian Opposition dormant till the Elevation of the House of Orleans, the first foreign Attachments of which are Austrian—Third Period of the Decline of Austria, the Termination of its Reign in Spain.*

THE splendor of the reign of Lewis XIV. and of the treaty of Westphalia, did not allow Austria to raise her head, or to form any opposition in France. The protestants, the parliament, the clergy, all submissive, were only the passive admirers of the reign of that king. Against Spanish and German Austria, this prince directed the talents of his generals, the sagacity of his ambassadors, and the profound judgment of his ministers. The long series of great men, whom he had the discernment to select, emulously sought to render themselves illustrious by pursuing our rival, and striving to vanquish her both by policy and arms. Maria Theresa of Austria, his consort, was silent, submissive, and a cipher. Under his reign Austrian Spain was little better than a province of France.

Europe, which for centuries had enjoyed the sight of Spain arming against France, and enfeebling her forces, beheld with alarm this brave and rival nation converted by Lewis XIV. into

a monarchy devoted to France. The accession of the house of Bourbon to the throne of Spain, was the most disastrous blow that France ever gave the house of Austria; the most prominent epoch, and the most evident proof of its relative and progressive decline.

§ VI. *Austrian Regency of the Duke of Orleans—Conspiracy of Cellamare against that Alliance.*

An infirm infant succeeding in 1715 to Lewis XIV., the duke of Orleans was desirous of reigning in France, if that infant should die. The king of Spain on his part entertained similar hopes.

Austria and England promised the regent every thing: the king of Spain was enraged: the regent concluded first the triple and afterwards the quadruple alliance, between France, Austria, England, and Holland. Marshal d'Uxcelles, president of the council of foreign affairs, and the duke of Main, both educated at the court in opposite maxims, refused to sign the treaty. All the lords of the court of Lewis XIV. rose in opposition to it; and the Spanish conspiracy broke out. The objects of this conspiracy were, to carry off the regent, to convey him prisoner into Spain, to establish another person in the regency, and to prosecute the scheme of dismembering Austria in favour of

France and Spain, instead of forming an alliance with that power. The regent triumphed over his opponents, and took off the heads of three leading men in Bretany, who were implicated in the plot.

§ VII. *Anti-Austrian Government of Lewis XV. down to the Treaties of 1756 and 1758—Resumption of the old French System after the Regency of the Duke of Orleans—Epoch of Frederic King of Prussia—Alliances between Prussia and France—Fourth Period of the Decline of the House of Austria.*

Under cardinal Fleury, France naturally returned to it ancient system. United with Spain, she conceived the project of taking away the kingdom of Naples from the emperor, and succeeded. At the extremity of Italy we established a new prince of the house of Bourbon, and pursued our ancient plan of dismemberment. In 1740, there appeared in Germany, a monarch, who discerned the sure and progressive decline of the house of Austria. He attacked her on the north, while we were assailing her on the west and south; and took from her Silesia, the most important of her provinces, at the same time that the king of Sardinia dismembered her Italian territories.

Thus in every war the proud family of Austria lost one or two of its provinces, one or two of its kingdoms. Spain and Naples were no longer

under the Austrian yoke. We enriched our allies with provinces, which were too remote for ourselves; and we incorporated with our own territories what lay commodiously for the purpose.

§ VIII. *Principles of Lewis XV. favourable to Austria from 1756 to his Death in 1774—Opposition of the Dauphin—Lewis XV. is assassinated some Time after the Treaty of Vienna, and the Dauphin poisoned a few Years afterwards.*

In this state of decline, Maria Theresa, distracted by so many losses, resolved to form an union with a monarchy so successful in its plans of destruction. To accomplish this purpose, she employed as her envoy count Kaunitz, that immortal politician, to whom Austria is indebted for the preservation of her dominions, and her compensations in Poland for the losses she had sustained..... Kaunitz possessed the exterior levity of a Frenchman, with the depth and wiliness of an Austrian—He proposed to the court of Versailles an alliance, palliating every thing that history now perceives in it humiliating to the French name. He negotiated with madame de Pompadour, flattered with the idea of pleasing Maria Theresa; and with the abbé Bernis, who had a fortune to make, and panted after a cardinal's hat.

All the European powers of the second order

anciently friends of France were alarmed. They knew the dauphin to be attached to the politics of his house. Some of them had recourse to him in secret. Holland, which we had formerly metamorphosed into a republic at the expence of Austria; Switzerland, whose sovereignty we had caused to be acknowledged in the treaty of Westphalia; the house of Savoy, whose territories we had augmented in the last two wars, to the prejudice of the emperor's dominions; and all the Germanic powers, both protestant and catholic, who lost by the treaty of 1756 an ancient and natural support; reiterated their representations and memorials at the court of Versailles.

Favier, educated in Anti-Austrian principles, and firm in that party, in an instant produced a memorial on the subject, which has become an elementary work, the rule of our good ministers, and of those negotiators, who do not forget they were born Frenchmen.

The memorial of the dauphin, father to Lewis XVI., on the same alliance, delivered to the abbé Bernis, is not less remarkable for the views and predictions it contains. This memorial is placed at the end of this volume, as an authentic document.

It is there proved, that the alliance would be subversive of all our ideas, and all our principles: it is demonstrated, that it would keep

all powers in a state of constraint and alarm, and that France would lose the valuable title of protector of the independence of Italy, of the balance of the north, and of the confederacy of the Germanic states.

Among all these sovereigns alarmed and vexed at this union of great powers into one mass, and at the loss of France, the king of Prussia was most eminent. This prince conceived a resentment against the king, the abbé Bernis, and the favourite, which continued till his death, and even beyond it, for it is visible in his Memoirs. He remembered the men and money that France had sacrificed in 1741, to exalt his monarchy at the expence of Maria Theresa's. At the peace of 1748, he contrived to retain Silesia, and now he saw the political system of aggrandising his dominions subverted. He beheld his natural enemy, Maria Theresa, forming a coalition against him with France, once his support, and with Sweden, Russia, and the Empire, his natural allies. The union of these forces with those of France had procured him Silesia: the armies of France, united with those of Austria, threatened to take it from him. Maria Theresa, who conceived this project, entertained the design of despoiling and reducing him to such a point, that in the condition of a marquis of Brandenburg simply he should be unable to attempt any further enterprises against

the domains of the house of Austria. She had it at heart to give a signal lesson to the Germanic powers, the sovereignty of which she affected, and she intended France to defray the expence.

At this period, Lewis XV. was assassinated by Damiens. The Austrian faction already formed at Paris, and in union with madame de Pompadour, that faction inimical to the jesuits, to the king of Prussia, and the dauphin, whose reign and opposite politics it dreaded, took this affair into its hands. To render the king its instrument, it instilled into him the belief, that Damiens had been led to his attempt through the intoxication of fanaticism, by the secret orders of the dauphin, the king of Prussia, and the jesuits. It added, that Frederic had sought, by a change in the throne and cabinet, to dispel the storm that blackened over his head, and dissipate a coalition that threatened to subvert his monarchy. It affirmed that the jesuits expected from it the benefits of a reign favourable to them; and that the dauphin and his ambitious consort, who lived in eternal opposition to the king, and to those whom he honoured with his favour, accelerated by this assassination the end of their unpleasant state of life *.

* The king of Prussia in his Memoirs, speaks of the assassination of Lewis XV. in very few words; but they deserve to be

Count Stainville, the king's ambassador at Rome, arrived at this juncture, and was accused of having persuaded the king, that the jesuits, the king of Prussia, and the Dauphin, were the sole movers of the crime of Damiens. He was reported to have said, that the empress's agent was possessed of proofs of this; and that as long as the jesuits in France, Frederic at Berlin, and the dauphin looked up to his crown, the king's life would never be safe. Then leaving it to *the king's sagacity*, to judge, how he ought to act towards the dauphin, he proposed the destruction of the jesuits, as the most certain expedient for stifling a conspiracy long formed; and affirmed, that the most intimate alliance with Maria Theresa, was the only means of carrying fire and sword to the gates of Berlin, and de-

considered, for they show his great sagacity with respect to his own interests.

"While the court of Versailles was thus labouring to prepare the means of overturning Germany, a madman," says Frederic, "was near occasioning a REVOLUTION IN FRANCE. He was an *obscure fanatic*, who having been a domestic in a convent of jesuits in Flanders, proposed to himself to assassinate Lewis XV..... Hitherto the public have been but *vaguely informed of the motives*, that led this monster to such an atrocious attempt."

But if Damiens were a *madman*, as the king of Prussia calls him, he had no motives*: and on the contrary, if Damiens were a monster, led by motives to occasion a revolution, he was *not* a madman. In this account given by Frederic, there is an indecision, an alternative worthy of remark.

* M. Soulavie is not correct here: madmen act from motives, as well as men in their senses; but their motives are false, or imaginary, from their ideas of things being perverted or erroneous. *(Translator.)*

stroying a prince, dangerous to all crowned heads, and particularly to the repose of France.

In the eyes of the Austrian faction, count Stainville was naturally a man of genius, and a statesman of great talents. It sent him to the court of Vienna, as the ambassador of Lewis XV., there to receive the orders of Maria Theresa; and instructions for reducing Frederic to a marquis of Brandenburg, to strengthen the union of the great powers by a treaty, and to stifle the conspiracy of the court of Berlin.

The following November, after having remained ten or eleven weeks at Vienna, count Stainville, created duke of Choiseul, returned to Versailles, to execute the designs of Maria Theresa, in quality of minister of foreign affairs. Abbé Bernis had been too good a Frenchman in the first treaty of Versailles with the court of Vienna, not to be considered by the duke of Choiseul, as a man not to be depended on, dangerous and proper to be removed. The first treaty with the house of Austria, had procured this abbé the promise of a cardinal's hat; and now the folly of this treaty was manifest, and he was justly alarmed by the battle of Rosbach, and the rupture of the convention of Closter-Severn, he was about to be dismissed by the duke of Choiseul and madame de Pompadour. That is to say, he was falling into nothingness, when there was an appear-

ance of his becoming wise, when he was preparing to put an end to a ruinous war, and to leave to the house of Austria the care of avenging itself of the king of Prussia by its own means. But of this neither Maria Theresa, nor Choiseul, nor madame de Pompadour, had made account. They gave the abbé Bernis the cardinal's hat, which he had been promised. He had opened the doors of the cabinet of Versailles to the court of Vienna. When he discerned the precipice, and was going to shut them, they sent him into exile. The duke of Choiseul took his place as minister of foreign affairs, and Bernis was afterwards sent to Rome, to prevent the consequences of his repentance, and oblige him to prosecute the plans of the faction with respect to the jesuits, whom he did not love, and whose distruction he prepared with such effect and success.

The court of France, delivered from the storm engendering against its rising system of foreign affairs, was from that moment subjugated by the foreign faction. Choiseuls issued from every corner of the earth, and raised themselves in every part. They multiplied in the king's council, and at the head of administration. The greatest nobles of Lorraine, become Frenchmen since the union of their country, increased this party. Some were relatives or pensioners of the empress: others had been Austrians in their manners and in their hearts from their

birth. Madame de Grammont, the famous sister of the duke of Choiseul, an intriguing, dangerous, witty woman, was the soul of the faction: madame de Pompadour, an enemy to the dauphin and to the jesuits, a favourer of the modern philosophy, and calling herself the founder of the new politics establishing in the cabinet, was its protector. She had resolved to dismiss the cardinal Bernis, and send him away: she openly favoured every one who called himself an Austrian in the court of France.

This faction being thus organised, she subjugated the king by the same means as those which madame de Maintenon and the legitimated princes had employed to govern Lewis XIV. in his old age. She inspired Lewis XV. with apprehensions for his life: she suggested dangers from the dauphin and dauphiness, whom she charged with secret ambition: she accused the *regicide politics* of the jesuits, and the immorality of the king of Prussia, as *capable of the greatest crimes*;—Frederic, to preserve the provinces conquered from Maria Theresa; and the jesuits, to maintain themselves in them under an infidel potentate. She persuaded Lewis XV. that the jesuits had made a secret treaty with Frederic to live peaceably on their estates, under that irreligious and protestant prince, which had fallen under his military government. She told him, that they had promised to hasten the end of his

reign, the sooner to annihilate the league between France and Austria, alarming to the repose of the secondary powers. This plan of a foreign conspiracy against the life and new principles of Lewis XV. was seducing. It petrified with fear the pusillanimous heart of a king who was led by it to see nothing but a new Damiens wherever he turned his eyes. Brought, by his unbridled libertinism, to a state of premature decay, the king thus circumstanced, and incapable of any spirited act, abandoned his cabinet to the Austrian party recently established in the court of France.

Two years and half afterwards, the king of Portugal likewise was assassinated. In this affair the jesuits were implicated afresh, and with great noise. The alarms of Lewis XV. increased, and M. de Choiseul, strengthened by the fears of a king dreading death, proceeded to all the violent measures, necessary to establish the plan of politics, by which the court of Versailles was to be governed.

The duke of Aiguillon, great nephew to cardinal Richlieu, was the intimate friend of the dauphin; and what the prince was obliged to confine to his thoughts, from the discretion necessary to the heir of the crown, the duke of Aiguillon executed. Choiseul, on the contrary, by birth a Lorraine, and the son of an ambassador from the husband of Maria Theresa to the

court of Versailles, a stranger to France, and a subject of the emperor, to whom he was related, was wholly devoted to the interests of the court of Vienna. Strong in the power of madame de Pompadour, whose head the empress had turned with vanity, by bestowing on her the title of *cousin* and some flattering presents; supported by the credit of the parliament, whose *protector* he styled himself; a declared enemy to the jesuits, ever since he had manifested his hatred to their general at Rome: these circumstances, and his extraordinary vanity, rendered him careless of making his court to the dauphin, who declared himself of diametrically opposite principles with respect to the authority of the king over the parliament, and to the policy of France towards the house of Austria. Bold and vain, yet thoughtful and deep, with much firmness, and consistency in his plans, he had all the qualities requisite, at a time when the king appeared mastered by fear, to become in France with the utmost impunity the chief agent of the court of Vienna, for drawing closer the alliance of 1756, removing the abbé Bernis from a post, where he had not done enough for the Austrian government, and for destroying at any price the obstacles that opposed his schemes. Born to a fortune below mediocrity, and having little to lose, his system offered him a prospect of that pomp and power, which we have seen him display.

To reach these, and maintain them, he had in the Austrian embassy, in madame de Grammont, his sister, a woman bold and profound, and in the king's favourite, a council possessed of means sufficiently powerful to obtain his ends.

His enemy, the duke of Aiguillon, had very different principles. Uniformly supported in secret by the dauphin in all his oppositions to the new politics; heir to the maxims of Richlieu, his great uncle, who had established despotism in France, and was the founder of the hatred of the Bourbons to the house of Austria; he was little capable of conducting the affairs of the state, otherwise than by prosecuting the system of military government: a friend to the dauphin, he daily lamented with him, but in silence, the Austrian alliance; he loved the jesuits, and he was a secret enemy to the parliament, who displayed a greater inclination for liberty. He hated the innovating philosophers, and he formed a powerful party at the head of the jesuits, St. Sulpice, and the devotees of the court. The party of Choiseul had every thing to fear, that of Aiguillon every thing to hope, from a change of reigns and the dauphin's accession to the crown. Such were the two persons, such the two extraordinary schemes of government, that agitated France towards the end of the reign of Lewis XV. On one hand,

the duke of Choiseul, with his Austrian alliance, his jansenists, his parliaments, and his philosophers, attacked the jesuits at home, and abroad sacrificed the glory and preponderance of France, to the interests and vanity of the house of Austria. On the other, the duke of Aiguillon, uniting himself with the jesuits, either to save them, or to restore them after their fall, laboured with them to ruin the parliament, and establish absolute authority. While imposing fetters on the nation at home, Aiguillon was desirous abroad of emancipating the secondary powers friendly to France, from the constraint in which they were kept by the monstrous union of the great powers of France, Austria, and Prussia. The duke of Choiseul, in forming this union, was preparing future fetters for Poland, Prussia, and Turkey. Thus the duke of Choiseul became by his principles the tyrant of the subaltern powers, terrified by the grand alliance, and favoured liberty in France itself: while Aiguillon arrived to relieve the secondary powers or to establish tyranny at home. Thus with his Choiseuls, Grammonts, and Pompadours, the duke of Choiseul annihilated the system of Henry IV., Richlieu, Davaux, Mazarin, Lewis XIV., Servien, Belle-Isle, and even of cardinal Fleury, who twice made war on the house of Austria, and took from it, by force of arms, or by negotiation, the kingdom of Naples

and the two Sicilies, Lorraine and Barrois. Finally it was thus Aiguillon, on the other hand, laboured to consolidate the system of despotism, which his great uncle had established at home.

The court of Vienna, having enchained France by whom it was formerly kept in fear, dared afterwards resume in Europe the offensive system of Charles V., and treating France as a conquered country, or vanquished enemy, obliged her to make war at her own expence against the Prussian monarchy, and subsidise her enemies.

By the articles of this second treaty, concluded in the month of December 1758, the king engaged to furnish Maria Theresa with men and money for the purpose of despoiling Prussia, and to pay the Swedes, who should be obliged to take the field against Frederic. He promised to subsidise the Saxon troops under the orders of the court of Vienna; to furnish Maria Theresa, during the continuance of the war, with eighteen thousand foot, and six thousand horse, or to pay her 3,456,000 florins a-year; to defend the German empire, and the Austrian Netherlands with a hundred thousand French; and to procure, on the conclusion of peace, Silesia for the court of Vienna, and the imperial dignity for Joseph II.

This treaty, which converted France, as was said, into *an Austrian province*, filled the mind

of the dauphin with no less consternation, than the regent's treaty with the court of Vienna had impressed on the children of Lewis XIV. This prince, who saw in it the ruin of his house, said to the duke of Aiguillon—"When France makes war on her own account, she derives at least some advantages from it, to compensate her losses; but France on this occasion, enslaved by the duke of Choiseul, makes war only at the pleasure of another, and drains herself solely to exalt the house of Austria her rival, to humbling and despoiling of whom my family owes its glory, and its power: and would they have me insensible to this forgetfulness of all our interests, and contempt of the principles of our aggrandisement and consequence in Europe?"

These words taken from the papers of Lewis XVI. show the profound political views of the dauphin his father.

CHAP. II.

Reasons of the Duke of Choiseul for the Destruction of the Society of Jesus, and all the Jesuits as Agents of the Dauphin —Damiens having failed in the Execution of his Design, Lewis XV. receives Warning from the Austrian Faction of a second Assassination—Reasons of the Duke of Choiseul for disgracing in the Parliament by a legal Act, the Duke of Aiguillon, Chief of the Anti-Austrian Party—The Duke of Choiseul directs the Publication of the Works by which he had wrought on the Imagination of Lewis XV. after his being assassinated—The Jesuits accused of Poisonings and Assassinations, executed or attempted, against the Persons of Henry IV., Lewis XIII., Lewis XIV., the great Dauphin, the Regent, and Lewis XV.—The Duke of Choiseul instigates M. de Voltaire against the Jesuits—Abolition of this Society in France in 1762.

THE duke of Choiseul, having established his power abroad on the protection of the empress, sought to render it solid at home. The dauphin was firmly resolved on his accession to the throne, to demolish the Austrian edifice, erected at the court of Versailles. The death of this prince was decreed. The house of Austria beheld on the throne a thoughtless monarch, governed by a favourite, devoted to the new system; and it was its interest to profit by the king's old age, to let the sceptre be swayed by the duke of Choiseul in his stead, and to prevent a new reign. All the operations of the

duke of Choiseul tended to direct affairs to this prime object. Damiens having missed his blow, the dauphin being still intimately connected with the jesuits, and the animosity of the king of Prussia continuing the same, the duke of Choiseul had to dread, as in the time of Henry IV., a a second, a third, or a fourth assassination, which should disconcert all his plans. With this he incessantly menaced the pusillanimous Lewis XV., and it was definitively resolved, that the society of jesuits should be destroyed.

In the person of the duke of Aiguillon, the dauphin beheld the only man belonging to the court capable of overturning all the measures of the faction, and resuming the ancient system of politics: all the rest of the courtiers were mere ciphers, or were bought off. To degrade him whom he could not corrupt, Choiseul resolved to connect himself more closely with the parliaments, and instigate them against the duke of Aiguillon: with them he aimed at nothing less than his honour, and if possible his life. These court intrigues tended to deprive the dauphin, and the few remaining partisans of the old foreign politics, of a courtier possessing reputation, and not destitute of the means of supporting the system of his uncle, the great cardinal Richlieu.

The solemn publication of the facts, with which the society of jesuits had been accused in

secret to Lewis XV., to fill his mind with alarm, was the first political attack.

The duke of Choiseul, bold in his conceptions, thought it expedient to persuade the public, what he made Lewis XV. believe; and the work entitled "The Jesuits guilty of Treason, both in Theory and Practice," was printed by his orders towards the end of 1758. After this the theological works of the jesuits of all nations were scrutinised. In them it was found, that the jesuits at all times, and of every country in the world, had taught and approved of the murder of tyrants for the benefit of religion. In the second part, the duke of Choiseul asserted, that this doctrine had been carried into practice; namely, against the sacred person of Henry IV., of Lewis XIII., even of Lewis XIV., of the great dauphin, of the regent duke of Orleans, of Lewis XV., and of the king of Portugal. In a copy preserved in the cabinet of Lewis XVI. are some curious remarks in the dauphin's own handwriting, respecting the part taken by the duke of Choiseul, to fill his father's imagination with terror. In another copy from among the papers of Lewis XV., we find on the other hand manuscript notes against the jesuits, which the editor of the work did not think proper to lay before the public, or which the duke of Choiseul added, in order to work upon the imagination of the king. In these the jesuits are repre-

sented as assassins, always ready to aim the poniard at the heart of a prince not their disciple, on the mere instigation of any foreign power, that would consent to make some sacrifices for the establishment of their congregation. The king of Prussia is particularly named there, as an accomplice in the assassination of Lewis XV.

Voltaire was presently invited by the duke of Choiseul himself, to write against the jesuits, and to paint them as the assassins of kings. He had been abused by the members of this religious order in several numbers of their journals, and the duke, who sought the means of accomplishing their destruction from every quarter, easily prevailed on the philosopher to reproach them with "crimes that had filled astonished Europe with horror, and with the innumerable works of those jesuitical theologicians, vomited out by hell, that put the dagger into the hands of parricides." Such were the expressions of the duke of Choiseul in his letters, and such were those of the philosopher, whose example was a guide to the party, that hailed him their patriarch. The assassination of the king of Portugal, and the expulsion of the jesuits from his dominions, which the duke of Choiseul forwarded by all the means that his post of minister of foreign affairs could supply, contributed still more to heighten the pusillanimity and panic

fear observed in Lewis XV. after his assassination.

When the duke of Choiseul had brought on the jesuits the resentment of the philosophers, he delivered them up to his friends, the members of the parliaments, the irreconcileable enemies of the jesuits ever since their institution. The public history of their abolition is sufficiently known; but the repugnance shown by Frederic to expel them from Silesia is by no means a matter of notoriety. He did not consent to deprive them of their establishment, till induced to it by the political negotiations of several powers; and when he was obliged to yield to their instances, the jesuits were better treated than in other states, where their destruction had been determined.

CHAP. III.

Grief of the Dauphin at the Ruin of the Jesuits—He loses active Partisans, vigilant over his Interests—A Domestic poisons the Dauphin and his Consort—Society of the Queen: this Princess dies in the same Manner as her Son and her Daughter-in-law—Murmers of France—State of the Party of the Jesuits and of the Dauphin.

THE dauphin was distracted at the ruin of the jesuits, and the duke of Choiseul did not neglect to load with ridicule that prince, who opposed the proceedings of the cabinet as much as was practicable for the presumptive heir of the crown. The house of Austria, satisfied with having at Versailles a minister at its devotion, approved of the means employed by the duke of Choiseul for attaining the execution of the general plan, treated the jesuits with coldness, and permitted them to be deprived of some of their establishments in Hungary with impunity. This society, assailed on all sides, daily felt the decline of its weight in Europe: in France, where it had so long attacked, pursued, and persecuted the protestants, the rigourists, the parliaments, the jansenists, and particularly the philosophers,

since their appearance in that country about 1740, it was reduced to act on the defensive. Thus the dauphin, who was supported by the jesuits, and the party of the archbishop of Paris, beheld in the degradation and punishment of his friends, an indirect attack on his principles, at which he conceived the highest displeasure. From policy he suppressed the expression of it; but he said to cardinal Luynes—"My turn will soon come: happy for them, if they pardon my friends."

Dissimulation was so much the more necessary to this prince, as he saw himself surrounded and observed by several persons, whose power increased in proportion as he lost his friends. Madame de Pompadour, whom he joined the whole nation in detesting, and to whose libertinism his exemplary domestic conduct as a husband was a continual reproach, saw in him the persecutor of her old age, if he should succeed Lewis XV. It was to little purpose she dissembled her sentiments; it was to little purpose she engraved with her own hands the portraits of the dauphin and dauphiness from more elegant drawings than those which she had engraved of Lewis XV.; this affectation could not impose on the lowest lord at the court. The heads of Choiseul's party, and the heads of the party of the dauphin, were equally

acquainted with the true value of madame de Pompadour's expressions.

This prince perceived himself wasting insensibly. Ever since 1760 he was preyed on by a slow and unknown disorder. His plumpness, admired by all the court, and his lively and florid complexion, were changed to leanness, paleness, and at length a cadaverous hue, harbingers of the premature death that abridged his days.

Several memoirs, notes, and billets, which Lewis XVI. had collected and sealed with his little seal, lay this crime to the duke of Choiseul's charge. The duke of Vauguyon, a particular enemy to this minister, appointed by the dauphin to superintend the education of the princes of the blood, and of their eldest son the duke of Berry, afterwards Lewis XVI., never ceased to ascribe it to the duke of Choiseul. Richlieu, Aiguillon, the devotee madame de Marsan, the jesuits, and the sulpiciens, unanimously agree with Vauguyon in this accusation. This governor of the royal family ceased not to keep up in the mind of the eldest of these princes, since Lewis XVI., this fatal opinion. He continued to work on his tender, timid, and weak mind, and succeeded in alienating his young pupil from the duke of Choiseul, and persuading him, that the same valet had accele-

rated the death of his father, and shortly after that of his mother. This impression the king could never after efface.

The dauphiness, by birth a Saxon, was a woman of understanding, not destitute of religion, and possessed of eminent greatness of mind; she understood Latin, and several other languages, and was very desirous of distinguishing herself. Custom required, that in case of the dauphin's death, she should be called to the regency of France, during the duke of Berry's minority. Thus when the dauphin was dead, the grand Austrian alliance was still in jeopardy. The house of Saxony, thoroughly acquainted with the interests of the empire, of which it constitutes a part, and consequently of the advantage that would accrue to his family, the Germanic states, and above all to France, from re-establishing the old Anti-Austrian politics of the cabinet of Versailles, and overturning the monstrous structure of the duke of Choiseul, excited the apprehensions of this minister. It was an archduchess he had fixed at the court of Versailles as guardian of his treaty, not a Saxon interested in pointing out its mischiefs and effecting its destruction. The duke of Choiseul's reasons of state therefore, according to the duke of Aiguillon, urged that minister to destroy the dauphiness; as, according to the persons and me-

moirs quoted above, that accuse the duke of Choiseul of the crime, though they do not prove it, they had prompted him to destroy her husband. Thus much at least we know with certainty, that the dauphiness was ambitious, and that the minister dreaded her influence, her future authority, and the part which the electoral house of Saxony would have in it.

Thus, if we might credit the report of a Richlieu and an Aiguillon, we were deprived of a dauphin, whom the duke of Choiseul had contrived to render ridiculous some years before, by exaggerating his devotional exercises.

This prince, when his death was approaching, became sensible of the nature of his consort's disorder, which tended but to accelerate his own decease. Both languished in the persuasion, that they were sinking under no natural disease, and were ready to die with grief several times a day, when they embraced their eldest son, afterwards Lewis XVI. On observing their extreme sorrow, you might have said, that they foresaw his destiny. To the care of Nicolai they entrusted memoirs, to guide him on the throne, if he should ascend it at an early age. Not able to reign in reality, they were willing to reign by their counsels, by ministers of their selection, and after their death proscribe the duke of Choiseul, whose sentiments, respecting

the dauphin may be seen in the memoirs which that minister issued from his private press at Chanteloup. Thus ended the days of this unfortunate prince, who would have rendered France happy, and whose government would have been firm and vigorous. He died the 20th of December, 1765, and his consort the 13th of March, 1767.

Such was the extraordinary decay of the royal family towards the close of the king's reign. The queen, retired into her own apartments, having no courtiers but the president Henault, father Griffet a jesuit, cardinal Luynes, the duke of Luynes, who wrote every year at court a folio volume of memoirs, which the duke his son, at present mayor, has allowed us to consult and make extracts from, his wife the duchess of Luynes, and some other persons taking no part in business or intrigues, in her turn gave uneasiness to the ambitious Choiseul. He feared a new return of the ancient principles of foreign politics: he dreaded, in case of the king's death, the regency of a weak-minded woman, who, having no knowledge of affairs, might deliver the state to the direction of some lord of her own age, and possessing her confidence. The duke of Choiseul, thinking of giving Lewis one of the daughters of the empress as a second wife, and thus avoiding the dangers of a mis-

tress, particularly as he had openly quarrelled with madame de Pompadour, was accused by the same memoirs of having employed the same valet to poison her, though of this they are equally far from adducing proof. During these criminal speculations, the queen grew old in her practices of devotion. Seeing herself decline like madame de Pompadour, her son, and her daughter-in-law, she finished her days with the resignation of a religious princess. Without complaining of her destiny, she expired on the 24th of June, 1768. Her bowels were found to be mortified and putrid, and the duke of Choiseul was the first to explain the cause of it, asserting, that the drugs and spices, with which the Polish cooks season their ragouts, had this effect on the bowels of the queen. This fact is taken from a note in the memoirs of the duke of Luynes.

All France murmured at these unexpected deaths. The cardinal Luynes, the Nicolais, devoted to the dauphin, the count de Muy, all the persons employed in the dauphin's service; the duke of Aiguillon, marshal Richlieu, the jesuits and their partisans; the archbishop of Paris, and the noblemen or prelates who composed the dauphin's party, who had a thorough veneration for him, and who expected under him a favourable and friendly reign; renewed the

rumour that these deaths were not natural, and loudly accused the duke of Choiseul of them. Lieutaud, physician to the princes of the blood, charged with having prepared the poisonous drugs, and been obsequious to the designs of the duke of Choiseul, did not take the trouble to justify himself of a crime unproved, and indeed incapable of proof, but he placed at the head of his Practice of Physic an engraving of Alexander, drinking the medicine prescribed by his physician, immediately after putting into his hands the letter, in which that physician was accused of the intention to administer to him poison.

Marshal Richlieu delivered to the author of these memoirs a note respecting the rumours propagated against the duke of Choiseul. This note being communicated to cardinal Luynes, a man of great reserve, instead of being contradicted by the prelate, received his formal assent. He had been the friend of the dauphin, of the dauphiness, and of the queen: he had observed the progress of the disease, and preserved the remembrance of every thing that implicated the duke of Choiseul in the accusation. The marshal transmitted a similar note to count Mirabeau, author of the memoirs published by me under the title of "Memoirs of the Duke of Aiguillon," where are found the same particu-

lars respecting the poisonings, which certainly do not appear to be proved, but the accusations of which make a part of history, on which it is incumbent to develope the animosity of the parties that prevailed at court.

The royal family, seized with affright at beholding itself thus decimated, could not conceal the alarm with which it was struck. Madame Louisa, the king's fourth daughter, wrote to the king, and to the archbishop of Paris, to inform them of her resolution to end her days in a convent. She saw her family perishing with the same rapidity as that of Lewis XIV. Her sister, the infanta, duchess of Parma, had just died at Versailles before her eyes: the duchess of Orleans, the princess of Condé, her nephew the duke of Burgundy, her brother the dauphin, the dauphiness, the countess of Toulouse, her grandfather Stanislaus, and the queen her mother, had all been cut off in a very short space of time. In a panic terror, madame Louisa retired to the monastery of carmelites, where she continued till her death to occupy her mind solely with the affairs of religion and the cloister.

It must not be forgotten, that this was the period when the princesses imbibed their hatred for the duke of Choiseul, for his proceedings, and for the choice he made of Maria Anteinetta, whom he afterwards gave to France for her so-

vereign. The old king, a libertine and a devotee, appeared on this occasion desirous of returning to God. His will is dated at the period of his son's death; and he had friendly interviews with the archbishop of Paris. Escaped from the poniard of Damiens, he was no longer the same person: he vegetated without desires, and without any will of his own; asking pardon of God, and going from his devotions to the arms of madame de Cavanac.

Such then was the situation of the court of France, that it was composed of two parties, who ceased not mutually to detest, persecute, and calumniate each other; headed by two distinguished men, one of whom, the duke of Aiguillon, accused the other of having taken off half the royal family by poison; while his antagonist, the duke of Choiseul, accused him of plundering and harassing the people in his government of Bretany, in the most extraordinary manner, and secretly persecuted him in the courts of justice, to bring on him disgrace and dishonour. To the hatred of these two persons, their contradictory politics, their doctrines, and their mutual endeavours to effect each other's ruin, history will ascribe all the misfortunes of France, that began to display themselves towards the end of the reign of Lewis XV.

CHAP. IV.

Continuation of the Ministry of the Duke of Choiseul—Reflections on the Punishment of General Lally, considered as a political Measure of the Duke.

THE sanguinary government of cardinal Richlieu, and particularly the tragedies of the revolution in England, having proved revolting to all Europe, from the middle of the seventeenth century the current of opinion was strong against political assassinations, which obliged government to employ the punishment of death exclusively against highway robberies and murder. Lewis XIV. instituted capital punishment for felony only on the chevalier de Rohan, to whom he would have given a pardon had it been solicited.

During the regency, the immoral and implacable Dubois raised his scaffolds in Bretany: but Lewis XV. seeing nothing but pacific appearances under the administration of cardinal Fleury, the system of mildness prevailed in his government; yet madame de Pompadour, who succeeded almost immediately to the influence

which the cardinal had enjoyed over the king's mind, once declared, that she was perpetually studying to moderate the rage of the monarch, who was so frequently overcome with passion during the resistances of the magistracy. "If once the king requires blood to be spilt," said she, "I am certain the court may be deluged with it."

Lewis XV. was a man of a weak mind; the military power of the state alone could allow him to indulge in momentary rage: but the duke of Choiseul had a degree of mental energy, and a sufficiently decided character, to prevent recourse to those means of terror, which were still employed in the sixteenth century. The generation in which he lived was well bent and moulded to the royal will. The cruelties exercised on the jesuits, the young as well as the old; the gagging of Lally, which inspired all Europe with horror, and against which the English exclaimed as loudly as we did against them on hearing of the punishment of Byng; are indelible blots on his strange administration.

General Lally was a man of quality, who had devoted himself to follow the fortunes of the house of Stuart, expelled from the throne of England. He had chosen France for his new country, and had distinguished himself in the

war of 1740 against the English, particularly by breaking into the famous column of the enemy at the battle of Fontenoy. Being sent to India, he was there less fortunate. The French squadron, though superior to the English, abandoned Pondicherry, the most valuable of our possessions. Choiseul's party was humbled by the misfortunes of the war; and it had three motives, that required a victim: the first to make it believed abroad that the Irish had betrayed us, and save the honour of our flag; the next to enable the ministry to keep up their haughty tone at home, after the manner of Richlieu; and lastly, to ruin the near relation of general Lally, M. de Saint-Priest, *intendant* of Languedoc; who, designed by a powerful party for the place of the duke of Choiseul, had the courage not to disown Lally for his relation, to defend him, and to proclaim his innocence.

The English did not accomplish their views in the death of admiral Byng: and in the case of Lally, the equally senseless official accusation of having betrayed the interests of Lewis XV. met with no better success. The duke of Choiseul, who deceived the king on this occasion, insensibly declined in the good opinion of his master, when this prince, being afterwards better informed, learned that he had been mislead by his minister. It was to little purpose, the general's

condemnation was sanctioned by the forms of justice, the king was sensible of the fault he had committed, in leaving to the authority of the parliament, which he considered only as the tribunal for private disputes among his subjects, a cause of supreme jurisdiction, with which Choiseul had invested it. Thus, by the most strange perversion of ideas, the parliament was charged with the office of sitting in judgment on an affair of state, on a military transaction, of which generals alone were competent to take cognisance; and of a cause of the supreme jurisdiction, in which the parliament could not interfere without overturning all political ideas of a monarchy. M. de Choiseul changed his dear parliament into a committee, subverting on the other hand the moral maxims of the first tribunal of the realm, of a tribunal which, under former ministers, had been the natural and necessary enemy of arbitrary punishments, the enemy of government commissions, and the last asylum of the people of France, when persecuted by the enmity of ministers or courtiers.

All the parts of this strange proceeding were to be traced back to the invisible hand of the duke of Choiseul, who was the director of the whole: it was he who caused a commission to be given to the parliament to enquire into this affair. The metropolis was not inclined to

a punishment of this kind, particularly for crimes committed more than two thousand leagues off: it was necessary to rouse the public, and direct against the general all the means of ministers whose power is in danger, or enraged, or in a state of actual intoxication. Lally was accused of having betrayed the interests of the king, and the India company at Pondicherry.

The five magistrates, who were commissioned to make their report on the cause, declared at first among themselves, after a long examination, that general Lally was innocent. Yet, on the day when their report was finally to be given, two of them condemned him to death, and two others declared him not guilty. It was still in the power of the fifth to have saved him: but wavering between the two opinions, like a man who gropes his way blindfold, now inclining this way, now that, and now turning about, he at last said, to get rid of his doubts—"Let him die, that at any rate we may make an end of our business."

In the parliament Lally had the warmest partisans of the duke of Choiseul against him, and they went so far as to propose, that he should be condemned to the wheel. "If you really intend he should die," observed one of the most cunning, "sentence him to some other kind of death, for this the king will never be brought

to suffer." Lally was condemned to be beheaded, for having betrayed the interests of the king and the India company. "The nation requires an example," said the judges; "and not finding facts to lay before the public, it is upon the whole taken together we have condemned him." They had eluded the military testimonies of the Crillons and Montmorencys, who were the general's companions in India, and who listened to the depositions of Lally's groom and cook, who were offended with a master that had treated them with austerity.

The animosity of the judges against the general was so great, that one of them went to the king, to request him not to grant Lally a pardon. Among his numerous relations in France, mademoiselle Dillon alone had the courage to write to the king, requesting him to hear M. M. de Montmorency and de Crillon, occular witnesses of the courage and zeal of the unfortunate Lally. The king, governed and watched by the duke of Choiseul, was inflexible. Madame de la Heuse went and threw herself at his feet, supplicating his pardon: but the king was not to be prevailed upon, the duke of Choiseul never ceasing to beset him at Choisy.

On the day of execution this minister shut up every avenue, to prevent the repentance of a

king whom he mistrusted. In the mean time the hour of his death was hastened at Paris: the general was thrust into the first cart; and that he might not acquaint the people with the nature of his case, the executioner put a gag into his mouth by order of Pasquier. Consternation and affright spread through the capital: examples of such cruelty were to be found only in the annals of Rome brutalized under Nero.

When general Lally arrived at the place of execution, he began to offer up his prayers. Before he had finished the hangman made a stroke at him, which was ineffectual; on which three others laid hold of him and sawed off his head.

The son of general Lally, then at college, was informed, at the very instant only of the tragical scene, who was the author of his days: he flies from his tutors to pay his first and last homage to his parent, presses through the crowd, and finds nothing but his blood. At this news, the rage of the duke of Choiseul and of the parliament revived. The boy was sent abroad, and the proofs of his birth were destroyed.

The virtuous mademoiselle Dillon availed herself of a calmer period to open the eyes of the king, who at length allowed himself to be convinced, that general Lally had been harsh and severe in his command, but faithful to his king,

his country, and his honour. Lewis XV. caused the son to be restored to madamoiselle Dillon, with letters patent drawn up under his own inspection, in which his birth was declared; and restored to him his name and the estates of his father. The filial piety of this son, and the memoirs he published, moved the whole capital. He succeeded in restoring the honour of his father's memory, in spite of the powerful opposition of the parliaments.

Lewis the XV. expressed the most lively regret for the death of Lally, and complained of it to the duke of Choiseul. "It is not I," said he, "who will have to answer for his blood; for you misled me." *

It was not till the reign of Lewis XVI. that the young count Lally-Tolendal succeeded in wiping off all disgrace from his father's memory. After the duke of Choiseul was banished, the favour he enjoyed with Maria Antoinetta was a great obstacle to the restoration of his father's fame, which would dishonour a minister

* One of the zealous partisans of the duke of Choiseul has just published a character of that minister; in which he affirms, that the duke was obliged to give up general Lally to the voice of the people. We live too near the fearful times, when the people's thirst of blood was a scourge, to admit such an excuse. The duke of Choiseul lived at a time when ministers did not listen to the opinion of the people, but formed and moulded it as they pleased.

to whom she accorded her protection, without repairing his fault. The young Lally conducted himself with delicacy on this occasion, and gained the esteem of the queen. Sensible, amiable, graceful, and with a very engaging person, he solicited every one who enjoyed any favour at court, to obtain a revisal of the business. I promised him in 1786, in his closet, in rue St. Hyacinthe, to unite with all the other defenders of his father, and particularly to exhibit a true picture of the duke of Choiseul, whom his interests forbid him to mention by name. I now keep my word, and may this chapter draw the attention of republicans to that illustrious exile. He loved liberty, and would have had it such as it was then adapted to France. Did this entitle him to proscription? Does its continuance under a government of more moderate principles? Posterity, not insensible to sacrifices of self, will never forget his defence of his father, or his defence of his king. As early as the month of October 1791, Lally solicited the convention for leave to come and defend Lewis XVI., but this generous offer was rejected by passing to the order of the day: it produced nothing but the defence which he published, and which is a masterpiece of sentiment, like that which he composed in behalf of the memory of his father.

CHAP. V.

Motives of the Duke of Choiseul for ruining the Duke of Aiguillon, and the Means he adopted—Origin of the Affairs that annihilated the Parliaments—The Duke of Choiseul incites them against the Duke of Aiguillon—The Duke of Vrillière defends his Nephew d'Aiguillon in the Council of State—The two la Chalotais openly attack the Government of the Duke of Aiguillon, Commandant in Bretany—By Means of his Uncle, the Duke of Aiguillon procures them to be imprisoned—Insurrection of the Parliament of Bretany—Commission composed of Calone, Lenoire, and Senac de Meilhan, to ruin the two Breton Magistrates—Insurrection of the Parliament—The King summons the Cause before his Conseil des Parties—The two Magistrates are set at large, exiled, and declared innocent—Insurrection against this Treatment, and this Declaration—Critical Situations of the Dukes of Choiseul and Aiguillon—The latter acquires the Favour of Madame du Barry—The former negotiates the Marriage of the Dauphin, afterwards Lewis XVI. with an Archduchess, in order to maintain the Austrian System—Abbé Vermont sent to Vienna to instruct her in the Customs of France—Marriage of the Dauphin with Maria Antoinetta.

WHILE the duke of Choiseul was labouring to effect the ruin of the king of Prussia, by the war of seven years, as well as that of the jesuits and of the dauphin of France, he perse-

cuted with equal activity the lords by whom the dauphin had silently opposed his audacious proceedings. In 1744 madame de la Tournelle, whom Lewis XV. afterward publicly made his mistress, was deeply enamoured with the duke of Aiguillon, then a young man at the court under the title of the duke of Agenois. He distinguished himself in the war in Italy, and was wounded on the 1st of August 1744 at the attack of Bellins; the news of which so affected madame de la Tournelle, that she fainted, though then the favourite of a king. Behaving with prudence at court, he acquired the confidence of the king, whose manners he never thought proper to criticise. Named commander in chief of Bretany in 1753, admitted three years after chevalier of the orders, and having defeated twelve thousand English at St. Cast in 1758, he thought after this brilliant action he might aspire to the ministry. A declared enemy of the duke of Choiseul, who pursued the same career; a friend of the dauphin, who detested Choiseul; sought after by this prince, on account of his connections with the jesuits, and the enmity which the parliaments had declared against him: all these circumstances induced de Choiseul to endeavour his ruin. To succeed in this object, he resolved to employ the parlia-

ments: but the house of Aiguillon was more powerful than that of Lally. It is here proper to take up the thread of the affairs of the magistracy, in which the duke of Choiseul was not happy: they are connected with the history of Lewis XVI., who finding the magistrates in exile on his accession to the throne, recalled them to the execution of their functions.

The jesuits lamenting their destruction in France, endeavoured to oppose the edict for their suppression, and excite disturbances in Bretany, a country at all times zealous and irritable. The two la Chalotais, distinguished in the parliaments for their eloquence, their virtues, and the austerity and firmness of their characters, supported the proceedings of the duke of Choiseul; while the duke of Aiguillon, as a friend of the jesuits, and commander in Bretany for nine years, tolerated the excesses of the jesuits in that province, and in silence enjoyed the troubles excited there by the friends of the dauphin. Under these circumstances the parliament attacked the duke of Aiguillon's system of administration. He was held out to the people as a robber of the public money. La Chalotais succeeded in stirring up against him the whole province of Bretany; and the duke prevailed at court, through the intrigues of the

duke of Vrillière his uncle, to have the two la Chalotais seized and conducted to a state prison, both father and son, to punish them for their patriotism.

The king, a cipher in these first skirmishes, saw on one hand his minister, the duke of Choiseul, stirring up the la Chalotais against the duke of Aiguillon, while the duke of Vrillière, his other minister, imprisoned them in defence of the duke of Aiguillon's administration. The duke of Vrillière pretended that the two la Chalotais were enemies to the public tranquillity, and the authors of various pamphlets injurious to his majesty and the royal authority. The duke of Choiseul, and his adherents, maintained on their parts, that the duke of Aiguillon was guilty of scandalous acts of rapacity. To decide the difference the king appointed a commission, consisting of Calonne, Lenoire, and Senac de Mielhan. These commissioners, bought over to the party of Aiguillon, carried with them into Bretany a copy of a sentence of death against the two magistrates, dictated at Versailles. So little was thought of the delicacy and humanity of these commissioners at Paris, that they were accused there with having prepared the implements of death, and chosen a dexterous executioner, that nothing might disappoint them in the punishment they intended for the

two la Chalotais, whom Bretany considered as her heroes, and whose courage and devotedness to their cause were already the admiration of all France. Such was then the complection of the court of Lewis XV. in this business, that it sent against men reputed virtuous, three commissioners whom the public considered only as haughty tools of ambition, that wished nothing better than to set their hands to a sentence, as the means of getting into office. Calonne was deemed capable of consenting to sign any thing, provided he obtained the means of gratifying his debaucheries. Of Lenoir it was said, that money would be his only divinity in the business; and of Senac de Meilhan, that the love of money and debauchery would guide his hand. The spirited remonstrances of the parliament of Paris, encouraged by the duke of Choiseul, determined the council to recal the commission, and direct the parliament of Bretany to take cognizance of the affair.

The magistrates, finding this parliament garbled at the instigation of the duke of Aiguillon, challenged its competency, on account of the state in which it was. It was jocularly called in Bretany the bailiwic of Aiguillon [*le bailliage d'Aiguillon*]. To bend the la Chalotais, the court sent to them Duclos, a man of letters,

with directions to sound them, and to hold out to them the advantages of a quiet life, with rewards from the court. The moment the elder la Chalotais saw Duclos, he said to him with his wonted inflexible severity: "If you come hither as my friend, I am yours, and embrace you: if as a seductor, begone about your business." The king summoned the cause before his *conseil des parties*, and the two la Chalotais were removed to the Bastille.

Against these despotic acts the parliament of Paris exclaimed loudly, and reiterated its remonstrances. The turbulent and threatening conduct of Bretany gave reason to apprehend some violent and dangerous steps. In this critical situation the king sent to Bretany the president Ogier, a man of a mild, conciliatory disposition, and related to some of the magistrates; and the duke of Duras, who was no friend to the duke of Aiguillon, and whose wife, born in Bretany, was of the family of the head of the opposite party. Their official dispatches induced Lewis XV. to restore to Bretany the magistrates that had been dismissed, re-establishing the parliament in its former state, with the exception of the two la Chalotais, to whom the king would never restore his former favours, even when he declared their innocence.

This declaration, evidently consistent with

their rigorous treatment, exasperated the parliament still more. They all burst out in one common concert. To finish this endless quarrel, the court tolerated the famous cause brought into the court of peers, in which eighteen hundred witnesses from Bretany were heard against the administration of the duke of Aiguillon.

The duke of Choiseul had resolved to leave nothing undone, to prevail on the parliament to fix a stigma on the commander in Bretany. The king, on the contrary, favouring the opinion of the duke of Vrillière, was inclined to support the administration of the provinces in its natural independence of the jurisdiction of the parliament. Maupeou the younger, who in this affair took upon him to lead the parliament of Paris, of which he was first president, as the means of exalting himself to the dignity of chancellor of France, was obsequious both to the duke of Choiseul and the duke of Vrillière at the same time. The former he promised that he would procure the condemnation of d'Aiguillon, if he could obtain the seals; while he promised the duke of Aiguillon, if he should get them through his means, to ruin Choiseul. Thus securing the two opposite parties, Maupeou succeeded to the chancellorship on the dismission of his father, who had raised himself to the same dignity by similar stratagems.

Amid these troubles, both Choiseul and Aiguillon were frequently in the most distressing embarrassment. The abbé Broglio, who uninterruptedly corresponded in private with the king, and count Broglio—charged with the counter-correspondence on foreign affairs, carried on by secret agents, who acted as spies both on foreign courts, and on our own ambassadors, and who secretly deceived the empress—excited Lewis XV.'s suspicion of the duke of Choiseul's politics. They showed, that he was more devoted to the court of Vienna than to the concerns of France. Janel, director of the post-office, gave Choiseul notice of the plots against him. Senac, the king's physician, who was in the secret, prevailed on his majesty to hear what the duke of Choiseul had to say in his own behalf. This minister contrived to remove from the king's mind the impressions made on it by this secret correspondence. At this juncture the death of the dauphin happened, and Choiseul enjoyed a double triumph over his enemies. The duke of Aiguillon, on his part, surrounded by the dangers which the duke of Choiseul stirred up against him, was inspired with the utmost bitterness against a faction that attacked him in so many ways. The king's own regiment had been promised him in 1767. This year it was bestowed on

one of the opposite party, the duke of Châtalet, the duke of Choiseul's most intimate friend. The duke of Duras, his enemy, was become commander in Bretany, and he had only the light horse. He saw the late parliament of Bretany, which he had contrived to dissolve, restored to its former functions; while he was assailed by that of Paris, which laboured to ruin him by course of law, and tarnish his honour. A mistress, madame de Pompadour, had raised the duke of Choiseul to the ministry. Marshal Richelieu and the duke of Aiguillon employed the same means to turn him out, and support themselves.

It was under these circumstances, that madame Dubarry was presented at court. She was a child beautiful as Love, but had served an apprenticeship to debauchery in the brothels of the *rue St. Honoré*, which she had afterwards practised with some young courtiers, who persuaded her to treat the king as girls of that sort are accustomed to treat the old rakes of the metropolis. Lewis XV., whose imagination was equally worn out with his mind and body, found it amusing to divert himself with a woman of this cast. The duke of Choiseul, who had not yet lost sight of the plan he had formed of giving the king an archduchess to wife, for the support of his politics, started obstacles of every

kind to this new amour. He made madame Dubarry, under fictitious names, the subject of ballads sung in every corner of the capital; while she, deeply stung at this, published "The Amours of the Duke of Choiseul with his Sister, the Duchess of Gramont." Choiseul's party laid wagers, that madame Dubarry would not be presented at court; and the duke of Aiguillon's was equally eager to wager that she would be presented. Marshal Richelieu, able in affairs of this kind, did present her; and thenceforward the favourite was in want neither of courtiers nor admirers. She regularly received the homage of the princes of Conty and of Condé; she had at her court, marshal Richelieu, the duke of Aiguillon, madame de Château Renaud, madame de l'Hôspital, and madame de Va . . . . ., the most depraved of all the women about the court. Madame de Mirepoix, an eternal gambler, who wanted money, and received it through the means of the favourite, became her humble companion; and madame d'Aguillon, who had much more decency and reserve in her manners and disposition, was obliged by her husband to visit her. The chancellor soon ranged himself openly on her side, and presently there were distinguished at court *the party of the duke of Choiseul*, which grew gradually weaker, and that of madame

Dubarry, which increased every day. Every thing vile and disgraceful attached to the name of madame Dubarry was soon forgotten at Versailles: it was no longer remembered, that count Dubarry, her nominal husband, a cringing, dissolute young man, who had nothing but a family name to disgrace, had consented to a pretended marriage, in order to confer that name on a girl of the town who had none.

The duke of Choiseul, cunning and inflexible, aware that this mistress was no creature of his, presently negotiated for the dauphin the match which he had planned for Lewis XV. The empress had several archduchesses, all very handsome, whom she intended to govern the whole of Europe. From their earliest infancy she taught them that her imperial house was as much above other crowned heads, as princes themselves were above their subjects. She told them that family ties were never broken by matrimonial alliances, and that the archduchesses had ever been one of the sources of the glory and power of their house. This princess, who had her lovers in secret, shut her eyes to those lessons of gallantry, which her daughters received from their tutors. When the duke of Choiseul treated for the marriage of the dauphin with Maria Antoinetta, the empress desired him to send her an abbé, to instruct her daughter in

the customs of Paris and the French language. The duke of Choiseul applied to Loménie, to choose this tutor, and the abbé Vermont was sent to the young archduchess. But, instead of informing her, that the queens of France were happy in the last two reigns by contenting themselves with living piously, and pleasing their husbands, Vermont gave her lessons of inconsistency and dissimulation, and some say of immorality. It was this abbé, whom we have since seen refuse the most splendid dignities in the church, content with the private confidence of the queen, all powerful in her house, loaded with presents by the empress, assenting to the choice of ministers and nominations to bishoprics, and availing himself of the frivolousness of character he had instilled into the queen to rule unseen over the domestic affairs of her private apartments.

The empress, on her part, gave her daughter lessons of a different kind with respect to the French nation. To sway the cabinet of Versailles was their object, and to effect the ruin of France was their necessary consequence. By her laconic instructions, apparently insignificant, but in fact of extensive import, Maria Theresa gave her daughter a rule of conduct from which she never deviated.* She recommended to her

* See the piece that authenticates this further on.

the duke and duchess of Choiseul, the duke and duchess of Praslin, M. d'Hautefort, formerly the French ambassador at Vienna. She recommended to her *the du Châtelets her relations, the d'Estrées, M. d'Aubeterre*, who had pursued the same line of conduct at Vienna as M. d'Hautefort. She reminded her of the brothers *Montazet, M. d'Aumont, and Blondel*, who had been in the confidence of madame de Pompadour, for concluding the treaty of alliance, and who had resided at Vienna. She spoke of *Gérard*, and of *Beauvau the nun*, who, in the seclusion of her convent, shared in the intrigues of the court, and who was a native of Lorrain. Lastly, the empress charged her daughter not to be wanting in gratitude to *M. de Duras, and abbé Vermont.*

Of these two the former had left nothing unattempted in Bretany to crush his enemy the duke of Aiguillon; and the latter had educated Maria Antoinetta agreeably to her wish, that is to say, for a queen of France, still archduchess of Austria at Versailles, and ever disposed to do, and capable of doing, any thing in France for the advantage of her house: "I have the fortune of those two persons at heart," said Maria Theresa; "and I have directed my ambassador to take care of it." She desired her daughter on all occasions to render any service in her power to every one of Lorrain in general.

The nobles of that province, formerly the cradle of her husband's family, had already carried with them to the court of France sentiments favourable to their former sovereign; and the duke of Choiseul, by birth a Lorrainer, the most determined enemy of all the nobles at court, attached to the ancient principles of the house of Bourbon, was the first to set the example. The empress, by inspiring her daughter with an attachment to all the Lorrainers in general, consolidated her faction in the heart of the French court. As to Blondel, the king's *chargé des affaires* during the negotiation of the treaty, he had conferred in private with Maria Theresa, and embraced her first insinuations respecting an alliance: the marquis of Hautefort, our ambassador at Vienna, had followed the same plan; and while count Kaunitz negotiated at Paris, Hautefort seconded him at Vienna, as well as Aubeterre and Estrées. There was not *a single Frenchman* in our embassy at Vienna. All these sacrificed their country to the ambition of a foreign court. So much was our ancient natural character degraded during a reign, in which vile and sordid interest took the place of that old French honour, which performed so many prodigies in Europe under the reigns of Lewis XIV. and his predecessors, in the career of politics as well as of arms.

Thus with the firm intention of remaining an Austrian at the court of Versailles, Maria Antonietta departed from Vienna to espouse the dauphin, instructed by the abbé Vermont in the art of uniting dissimulation with levity, and taught by her mother on what persons she was exclusively to bestow her confidence. The true character of a princess, educated in a court that concealed in its bosom the most deep and ancient resentments against us, and the events for which she was to prepare the way in France, remained long unknown. She arrived at Compiégne the 14th of April, 1770, where she was met by the king and the dauphin; on the 15th she slept at Muette, attended only by her women; and on the 16th she came to Versailles to join the court, and go through the fatal ceremony of a marriage, which brought her to the scaffold. Twenty millions were spent on this occasion, a prodigious sum compared with the expences of the wedding feasts of former kings or dauphins of France. From all parts she attracted an astonishing number of Frenchmen: one single voice alone, that of a philosophy uneasy and discontented with such profusion, was heard proclaiming in pamphlets, that such a sum had better have been employed in lightening the burdens of the people. A feast obnoxious to severe and philosophical criticisms was the first spectacle ex-

hibited to Maria Antoinetta in France; the agonies and preparations previous to an execution were the last which she was destined to contemplate and to suffer.

Occular witnesses of the feasts of Versailles still bear testimony, that no description can convey an adequate idea of their magnificence. The most celebrated feasts of the reign of Lewis XIV. were not to be compared with those of the young dauphin's wedding. The beauty of the dresses, covered over with diamonds, which were worn by the ladies of the court; the elegance of their fashions; the illumination of a garden, enlightened as it were by enchantment, with many millions of lamps; exhibited a ravishing spectacle. We may judge of the feast from the signal splendour of the fireworks. Thirty thousand skyrockets, of half-a-crown each, rose together into the firmanent in the twinkling of an eye. In an instant the heavens appeared in a blaze, and the splendor of day succeeded the darkness of night.

An unexpected event soon plunged all France in grief. The city of Paris gave a second display of fireworks round the equestrian statue of Lewis XV. and the day of this festivity was chosen for a massacre, prepared by the vexation and resentment of the parties that were enemies in secret to the alliance. The orders of the

court, and writings of the times, accuse the mayors and sheriffs of the metropolis of incapacity. It is affirmed, that a competition with respect to offices and rights was the occasion of some neglect. It is said, that the architect of the city of Paris had imprudently left the square of Lewis XV. encumbered with large stones; but the massacre of twelve hundred people, continued even into streets not at all incumbered, too clearly proved, that it was the effect of premeditated design. Old men, women, and even children, natives of Paris, who were quiet spectators of the festivity, were killed in the Champs Elysées, on the bridge, and on the quays. Assassins armed with swords and daggers, were seen pressing through the crowd. The credulous and superstitious Parisians were far from rising on the occasion; they contented themselves with saying, that it foreboded an unfortunate reign. One single passage in the king's papers informs us, "that the vexation of those, who had thrown obstacles in the way of his marriage, broke out into rage on the day of the rejoicing, and that it was of essential importance to cover what passed on that day with an impenetrable veil, and not to suggest the least hint of the dreadful acts intended but not accomplished." There the king's memoirs stop.

The dauphin's marriage with an archduchess,

highly displeased the party of the late dauphin, and the jesuits, who did not like Maria Theresa. These monks, as able in the acts of deep intrigue as their opponent Choiseul in daring strokes, and still formidable to their enemies even amid the ruins of their colleges, resolved to ruin the duke of Choiseul, and the parliaments. For this purpose they excited fresh disputes. They were not ignorant, that the heads of the parliament had been set on at all times in secret by the house of Austria, whose possessions were the cradle of the jansenists. The duke of Choiseul and the parliaments on their side, seeing the moment of a final crisis approach, redoubled their exertions against the party of the jesuits, and of the archbishop of Paris, and against Aiguillon. They said, that he disgraced the royal authority by the depredations he committed in his province. The party of the jesuits and the duke of Aiguillon defended themselves by saying, that the parliaments in their rage were both judges and parties with their opponent, and subverted the first foundations of the monarchy, by subjecting administration to the judgment of an authority established for the purpose of deciding upon the private quarrels and disputes that arose between the jesuits. The king, distressingly perplexed by these discordant opinions, had it in contem-

plation to maintain his authority independent of his parliaments; and madame Dubarry, exasperated against the duke of Choiseul, encouraged him in every measure that favoured this disposition. She had even recourse to the influence of terror, so powerful an engine in the hands of mistresses or ministers for impelling kings to strong measures. She placed before the eyes of the pusillanimous Lewis XV. a picture of Charles I., king of England, beheaded by order of his parliament; and was incessantly preaching to him, that, if Charles lost his head upon a scaffold, history showed it to be owing to his continually increasing complaisance to his parliament, and the successive encroachments of that body on the prerogatives of the English monarchs. The king in his embarrassment adopted a middle course; after hearing the accusers and the accused in several sittings of the peers, he declared that he would hear no more of the cause, and annulled every thing that had been done in the business, both against the la Chalotais and against the duke of Aiguillon. The very evening on which issued the decree, he took the duke to sup with him, and announced that he would banish the two magistrates of Bretany.

This turn of affairs thwarted the designs of the duke of Choiseul. In the duke of Aiguillon

he saw an aspirer to the ministry; an opponent firm, courageous, and disposed to follow a plan the reverse of that which he had established; a declared foe to his system of foreign politics; and a secret enemy of the marriage of the archduchess with the dauphin. The jesuits, who yet aspired at being recalled with as much solemnity as the expulsion had been disgraceful, some old lords of the court of Lewis XV. still attached to the old maxims, madame Dubarry, and the duke of Choiseul's enemy the archbishop of Paris, founded their hopes on their good friend the duke of Aiguillon. Choiseul had sought to render Aiguillon incapable of the ministry, by endeavouring with the utmost activity to obtain from the parliament a sentence to dishonour him; but the decree of the council disconcerted this plan. However, as the decrees of the council, instead of appeasing the magistracy, roused its courage, particularly when it was agitated and influenced from without; the parliament, on its return to Paris after the famous sitting at Versailles, in which the duke of Aiguillon had been declared innocent, passed on the contrary a decree, in which the duke of Aiguillon was severely inculpated for the measures of his government during his command in Bretany, and suspended from his functions as a peer, till he should be acquitted by a legal sentence. To

this stroke of the parliament the king opposed an order to the duke of Aiguillon to continue his functions as a peer of France. The exasperated parliaments were proceeding to a trial of the duke, when the king came to Paris, to take away by an unforeseen act of authority the records of the proceedings in the cause, leaving the final decision of this intricate and perplexing affair to the chancellor, who resolved on the destruction of the parliaments.

The duke of Choiseul found himself afresh in a critical situation. His intriguing sister, the duchess of Gramont, went through all the provinces, to stir up the parliaments. The personal activity of the duke was still more dangerous. Conceiving that a foreign war would occupy the agitated minds of the people, and change the course of the king's thoughts, he prepared for invading England under some frivolous pretences. The intestine war of which he was the mover, and the foreign war which he attempted to rekindle, accelerated his fall. He was already become at court the mere butt of madame Dubarry's jests and sarcasms. The king was assured, and the favourite was informed by letter, that M. de Choiseul had a written promise from Maria Theresa of a small province, to be erected into an independent sovereignty and guaranteed to his heirs, if he suc-

ceeding in indemnifying the house of Austria for its losses, at the expence of the Prussian monarchy; and a note declaring the same was afterwards delivered to Lewis XVI. Madame Dubarry, the duke of Aiguillon, and marshal Richlieu, in their familiar conversations in the king's private apartments, no longer called the minister any thing but *king Choiseul*, or *the little king*. This critical situation of the two parties was at length terminated by a thundering *lettre de cachet* on the 24th of December, 1770; which the uncle of the duke of Aiguillon, the duke of Vrilliére, carried himself to the duke of Choiseul. The severe orders of the king assured him, that he would have been banished far beyond Chanteloup, if the king had not paid some regard to the health of his wife. He was enjoined to repair to this country-seat within four-and-twenty hours, and the *lettre de cachet* threatened him with still worse treatment in case of any further misconduct. The treatment of the duke of Praslin was a little less severe.

Thus terminated the public life of the famous duke of Choiseul, who employed so many persons, authorities, talents and daring means, to commit the greatest follies in France, and to conduct measures uniformly concurring to sap the foundations of the monarchy. Of the danger of these measures he was so fully aware, that

he always left the apparent direction of them to other hands, confining himself to the guidance of their invisible reigns. At first he caused the duke of Aiguillon to be attacked by the two brothers the Chalotais, and by all the parliaments in the kingdom; then, giving up the jesuits to the resentments of the parliaments, opposing to the principles established in France the innovations of philosophers, and overwhelming with ridicule the court of the dauphin, he gave the national character a new turn, which contributed to bring into discredit the king's government, and excited a wish for a new reign, and new forms in the administration of affairs. The declared enemy of an alliance with the king of Prussia, author of the continuation of the war of seven years, which abbé Bernis would have terminated, and which was as unfortunate as disgraceful, he brought France into such a state of discredit abroad, and disorder at home, that the weak and pacific Maurepas was ashamed to take the reins of government under Lewis XVI., without obliterating the disgrace of our naval defeats by signal successes. His draining the royal treasury principally to enrich the Austrian party; his converting France into a province, subservient to the interests of Maria Theresa; his taking away the life, as it is said, of the prince; his bestowing the archduchess on the dauphin, not-

withstanding the information that prince Lewis, our ambassador, gave of her character, manners, and easiness of disposition; are faults, or crimes, of such a nature, that they have rendered his memory equally odious to the ancient monarchy and to the French republic. This monstrous alliance influenced the declaration of war against the emperor in 1792; and all his connections with Maria Antoinetta remotely contributed to bring that princess to the scaffold. His administration proves the danger of raising to the ministry a madman, a foreigner, the relation of a sovereign of another country; a man without fortune, and without morals. Qualities like these in a minister have always proved the greatest scourge of states.

Such was the opinion of Lewis XVI., given in a portrait of the duke, which he left among his papers. It is so curious, that it would be blameable to withhold it from the public; and if it were the performance of that prince, it will evince the solidity of his principles, and the variety of his talents.

CHAP. VI.

Portrait of the Duke of Choiseul, written about the End of 1777 in the Hand of Lewis XVI., and copied from his Papers—Review of the Administration of this Minister—Result of his Ministry and Proceedings.

"THE duke of Choiseul had from nature what is seldom the lot of courtiers, or rather what their frivolous education, corruption of manners, and effeminacy of mind, rarely allow them to acquire, I mean *a character*.

"Bold, enterprising, decided, he had a degree of mental energy, which rendered him capable of pride. He had enough of talents to pass for a man of genius, and resources enough to enjoy the reputation of more.

"He had strength of mind, a thirst of glory, and such firmness in his decisions, that he braved obstacles, and surmounted difficulties, believing things to be practicable because he had conceived them.

"The duke of Choiseul had an atrocious disposition, for he stuck at nothing to effect his

purposes: he had likewise that in his character which is common to weak minds, as he employed the hand of another to act for him, while he remained concealed.

"He had a character peculiar to himself, and which I have never yet observed: he was prodigal of the favours of the state for the sole advantage of a foreign government, and preferred eventual remunerations to the certain rewards which he had in his own hands.

"The duke of Choiseul, in a country not freed from the dread of ghosts, had made friends of enthusiasts, men of ardent imaginations, which rendered him dangerous. He held majesty in check.

"Before his elevation, the duke of Choiseul neglected nothing to please the favourite of the late king. Arrived at the point he wished, he took no pains with another favourite to support himself. There is something intractable and inflexible in the character of the man, which renders him fit only for certain affairs.

"Accordingly his perilous administration left behind it no memorial but that rock in the Mediterranean, drenched with gore during two bloody campaigns, and at length conquered at great cost, to yield us nothing, but to occasion continual expences.

"1. *His destruction of the jesuits* only produced

a void, which no other body of men has yet been able to fill, to the great detriment of the education of youth, and of fine literature.

" 2. *His leagues with the parliaments* destroyed many ties that bound the subjects to their sovereign. To probe this wound requires much prudence and longer time.

" 3. *His alliance with the house of Austria* is so far good, as it put a stop to the scourge of war with that power, which allows us to attack the English at present without fear of a diversion; but this alliance is contrary to our interests by its great novelty, and because it permits the emperors to do all the mischief to our ancient friends in the north that is for their interest to do with impunity.

" 4. *The marriage of the queen* is entirely his work. He negotiated it, and concluded it, for the purpose of strengthening this alliance: but it is of essential importance to observe, whether the influence of this union will not increase the particular disadvantages we have found in this treaty.

" 5. *The war of seven years*, which the duke of Choiseul conducted, is another scourge to the disgrace of France both by sea and land. A second war is become necessary, to repair the mischiefs and dishonour it occasioned France.

" 6. *Philosophy has been supported and protected*

by the duke of Choiseul. The motives of this conduct are not to be fathomed like those of the other great measures of his administration. Its result is the creation of a party in France, with which it is become necessary sometimes to treat, or to use management. He has inoculated some of the members of the French clergy with philosophy, a new phenomenon in politics.

"The duke of Choiseul is charged with steps of another nature. He is even charged with them pretty openly. When one or more enormous crimes are problematical to the public, the very nature of these crimes forbids us to mention them. We must content ourselves with lamenting in secret the depravity of men and of the times.

"France has held out against the political strokes of the duke of Choiseul, and the deadly measures of state sometimes dictated to him by foreign powers, or a foreign power, with whom we ought to live on good terms, but of whom we ought to be incessantly watchful *."

If M. de Choiseul were minister at present, and if he pursued measures of the nature of those we have seen, could France hold out still?

* (*Austria*) is here written in the original, but by a different hand.

To enjoy in peace our territorial wealth, our industry, our relative strength, we require only rest and tranquillity, and prudence in the directing hand of government. A busy, vain, and ambitious minister, meddling with speculative politics, will always do mischief in France: and M. de Choiseul, from the commencement of his administration to his exile, was incessantly busied in overturning what had been erected by the wisdom, experience, and principles, of times past, and building up what principles, experience, and wisdom, had set aside or kept in check.

"The government had incessantly laboured to keep the parliaments in subjection; M. de Choiseul was incessantly stirring up the parliaments against the government.

"For ages government had been the protector of the secondary powers of Europe; and M. de Choiseul concluded an alliance with Austria, who took from us those powers, whose friendship and support were so necessary to us.

"Government at all times granted its special protection to that celebrated society which educated youth in submission, and in the knowledge of the arts, sciences, and elegant literature: M. de Choiseul gave up this society to the persecution of the parliaments, its enemies, and abandoned the youth to the system of philosophy, or

to the influence of the dangerous opinion, of the parliaments.

"Government had done every thing to support the Prussian monarchy in the north, as if to balance the preponderance of the natural enemies of France by this new state: and M. de Choiseul has lavished our treasures and our troops to destroy this monarchy for the benefit of our natural enemy.

"Government has never allowed authors to inspire the people with notions contrary to the peaceable and happy forms of monarchy, such as existed in France: and M. de Choiseul has evidently stirred up the modern philosophers, the jansenists, the parliaments, against the present constitution of the state, against the church, and against the kingly authority.

"Thus M. de Choiseul has constantly laboured, in all the departments entrusted to his charge, to *destroy* whatever he has found most sagely established; and M. de Choiseul has never *produced* any thing except

"*The insurrection of the philosophers and of the parliaments*: this dangerous commotion therefore must be checked.....

"*The insurrection of our natural enemy against our ancient friend* the king of Prussia and other states of the second rank: we must therefore

endeavour to revive our connections with his Prussian majesty. . . . .

" *The maritime preponderance* of the English is the consequence of the disasterous war that M. de Choiseul has carried against them: we must therefore reinstate ourselves, with the dignity of which we are capable, in that prosperity and maritime commerce which we enjoyed in the reign of Lewis XIV., and the decline of which began with the unfortunate war of seven years.

" Thus M. de Choiseul has been in France but a foreigner, whose heart has been constantly fixed elsewhere, instead of being in the departments of which he obtained the direction: whence we may put the question, whether M. de Choiseul can return to his post of minister with safety to France? His profusion has thrown our finances into disorder. Under his administration our navy has been annihilated. Our troops have been uniformly defeated on the Continent. Our measures have been influenced by an ancient rival. M. de Choiseul, therefore, has been the scourge of France, and of the different departments of the state."

Such is the portrait of the duke of Choiseul, which Lewis XVI. preserved in the secret port-folios of his private apartments at Ver-

sailles. The portrait of Lewis XVI. by the duke of Choiseul, that of his preceptors, of his governors, equally merit being preserved. It shows plainly, that gratitude was no predominant quality in the ex-minister: it shows that the inclinations of that courtier after his exile, still continued alien to the family reigning in France.

CHAP. VII.

Portrait of the Dauphin of France, composed at Chanteloup by the Duke of Choiseul during his Exile—Portrait of Lewis XV., his Ministers, and some of his Courtiers.

THE duke of Choiseul did not submit to his banishment to Chanteloup without resentment: he fixed himself there with a printing-press, and types cast abroad, and employed himself in printing his Memoirs in two volumes, and various pamphlets, in which he gratified himself by defaming Lewis XV., the dauphin, and the duke of Vauguyon. In these Memoirs he accuses Lewis XV. of wanting firmness in every thing but doing wrong; and speaks in a style of equality, of boasting, and even of superiority to him, with respect to his calculations. He accuses the duke of Vauguyon of talking to the dauphin about nothing but that prince's high birth, and his own, and of intoxicating him with the notion of royal omnipotence which nothing could resist: he charges that duke with incessantly inculcating into his pupil, that he ex-

clusively merited his confidence, with the exception of a few courtiers, whom he pointed out. Finally, the duke of Choiseul reproaches the dauphin with having no inclination for women, with being naturally vulgar, with being awkward in his manners, and with having the trick of repeating uselessly, on every occasion, three words of no meaning, the words ba, baca, bacala.

It is very remarkable in the duke of Choiseul's hatred to Lewis XV., and to his successor, that he calculates the consequences of the king's negligence with respect to the education of the dauphin, and the danger of the bad examples set him by the king: "If this prince remains what he is," says the duke of Choiseul, "it is to be feared, that his imbecility, with the ridicule and contempt that are the consequences of it, will *naturally* produce in this empire a decline, which will force the sceptre out of the hands of your majesty's posterity." This speech he puts into the mouth of a fairy, and the revolution, a sort of fairy, has fulfilled the prediction. From this single sentence we may appreciate the profundity of M. de Choiseul's talents.

As to the ministers and counsellors of state whom Lewis XVI. found in office on his accession to the throne, Choiseul, aware that they would not cease their endeavours to keep him at a

distance from the king, represents M. de Soubise and the duke of Vrillière as two persons without affection, without having any character of their own, and without any will, but that of the king; and Bertin as entirely at the devotion of Ferray, that minister of the finances who stuck at nothing to draw money from the people, already sinking under their burdens. The duke of Choiseul, banished to Chanteloup, gave vent to his resentment against that royal family to which he owed his dignities.

CHAP. VIII.

After the Exile of Choiseul, Lewis XV. destroys by Degrees his System of Administration—Triumph of the Duke of Aiguillon—The Destruction of the Magistracy of the Kingdom is resolved upon—The Weakness of the King is the Cause of this violent Proceeding—Personages who concurred by their Influence to produce it—Portrait of Madame Dubarry, who determined Lewis XV. by the Operation of Terror—Secret Anecdotes of Madame Dubarry, extracted in Part from Letters of Marshal Richlieu—The Magistracy is dissolved and its Members exiled—Pusillanimity of Princes—How the Court brought them to acknowledge the new Parliament.

THE duke of Choiseul had no sooner arrived at the place of his exile, than means were employed at court to subvert his system of government, and restore every thing to its old footing. He had instigated the magistracy against the authority of the king, and the abolition of this majesty was resolved on.

The king of Spain, encouraged by the duke of Choiseul, had endeavoured to break with England; but as soon as his disgrace was known at Madrid, the Spanish monarch gave the English perfect satisfaction as to the Falk-

land islands and port Egmont, which had been the pretext of the quarrel, and would not even examine the nature of his claims.

In conformity to the Austrian system, the duke of Choiseul had treated the secondary powers with a disdain that formed too striking a contrast with the protection which France before his ministry had so constantly and so usefully granted them: and Ebrahim Effendy, envoy of the bey of Tunis, who was admitted to an audience of the king, was therefore received with the greatest demonstrations of friendship.

By the marriage of monsieur, eldest brother of the dauphin, with a princess of the house of Savoy, a more intimate alliance with the king of Sardinia was effected.

The duke of Choiseul would never consent to give to Gustavus, hereditary prince of Sweden, when travelling in France, a reception suited to his rank; he remembered the great and dazzling things that had been effected in Europe against Austria by the alliance of France and Sweden: but after the excile of Choiseul, Lewis XV. admitted Gustavus to his secret conferences, and endeavoured to concert with him the means of consolidating by new ties the former friendship of the two kingdoms.

The most decisive act of the new government

against the system of the duke of Choiseul, was the grand blow by which the magistracy was overturned. Europe was astonished at seeing, under a weak king, who was already called in society by way of derision Lewis *the gentle*, the government capable of a step of this nature. The parliaments had in their favour a strong majority of peers, whom the duke of Choiseul had secretly attached to the magistracy; they had the powerful support of the house of Austria, which furtively dispensed bribes among the judges, and they were further reinforced by the reputation and credit of the jansenists, individually sold to the cause of the parliaments, which had always assisted them against the efforts both of the court of France and of Rome.

The party in opposition to the parliaments was also supported with considerable influence and zeal by personages who were in possession of a temporary credit. The duke of Aiguillon, rid of Choiseul, his cruel antagonist; the archbishop of Paris, who had sustained for more than twenty years a series of legal decisions constantly given against him by the parliament; the favourite of the king, who continually represented the magistracy to Lewis XV. as capable of imitating in France the tragedy of Charles I.; Maupou, chancellor of France; the

abbé Terrey, tired of the cries and complaints of the parliaments against him, in proportion as he multiplied corruptions in the finances; the jesuits, who wept over the ruins of their establishments; madame Dubarry, who undertook to influence the king in her secret and licentious interviews—all these powerful parties and personages united together to destroy the magistracy. The effeminate character of Lewis XV. was the principal cause of this extraordinary proceeding, this grand machination of the state. But it is time that I proceed to developе the source of the power of madame Dubarry, who, by her influence in the private apartments of the palace, contributed so effectually to its success.

The variety of opinions as to the birth of this lady sufficiently prove what kind of education she must have received from the authors of her existence. It was for a long time said, and believed by many, that her mother was a cook, and her father a monk. Others contradicted this origin; but all agreed in affirming, that from the age of twelve years she had publicly prostituted herself. Her first-known and avowed lover was Lavauvernardière; he soon left her, returned to her again, and again quitted her. She was then anew on the town; and the count

Dubarry, a native of Devignan, a few miles from Toulouse, a licentious young man, without probity or honour, a frequenter of all the houses of ill-fame, and distinguished afterwards at court with so much propriety by the appellation of *le roué* (*the infamous*), became acquainted with her. He procured her for the young noblemen at court, for the clerks in office, and particularly for Saint-Foix, principal clerk in the department for foreign affairs, with whom at last she lived publicly as his mistress. Saint-Foix, however, after a while gave her up to Dubarry, and Dubarry placed her at the head of a gaming house, which he established, and which became celebrated. It was there that Lebel, first valet-de-chambre to Lewis XV., found her, and thought her worthy to partake of the king's bed.

Lebel was the inventer and chief of the famous institution called *le parc aux cerfs*. This was a set of houses of debauchery near Versailles, where Lebel collected together the handsomest young girls he could procure in the capital, to supply the pleasures of the old monarch. It is known, that, by a sort of etiquette, our kings never eat of any dish at table till it has been first tasted by one of their attendants. Lebel had introduced this custom into the king's parties of pleasure, never presenting a girl for the amusement of the monarch till he had him-

self ascertained by experience that she was in good health. Mademoiselle Lange could have no scruple in submitting to this trial. The ingenious instructions of marshal Richlieu, who managed this affair, and who recommended to her to be neither bashful nor timid when in bed with the king, favoured the first attempts: she promised to act the part with all the skill of a girl who had ten years experience: Lewis XV. was quite astonished at this young creature, whose origin and mode of life in the capital he was yet unacquainted with.

The satisfaction of the prince, as well as the perfect obedience of the favourite to Lebel, being known to marshal Richelieu and the duke of Aiguillon, they consulted together about giving her a name. Dubarry, who had chosen and procured her, negotiated a marriage with his brother. It was concluded; and mademoiselle Lange was presented to the king as countess Dubarry, and by the intrigues of Richlieu solemnly acknowledged as his mistress. Such was the woman employed to animate the king against the parliaments, and effect their destruction.

The chancellor, on his side, enforced by reasons of state the necessity of abolishing the magistracy. He meditated a party blow, that he said would deliver the royal authority for ever from

a vexatious opposition, that had not ceased for fifty years to thwart the council of the king. This credulous prince suffered himself to be so completely guided on the subject by his chancellor, that on the evening preceding the day when he was to reply to the remonstrances of the parliament, he received instructions from him in writing. Following precisely the plans of the chancellor, the king consented to exhibit himself to the magistrates with an air of severity, and even to treat them with contempt and rage should circumstances require it. During this contest between the royal authority and the magistracy, and even for sixteen days before the exile of the duke of Choiseul, the parliament had ceased to exercise its functions. All the provincial parliaments, in a state of insurrection by the intrigues of the minister, renewed their remonstrances; and at every fresh instance, madame Dubarry was known to say—"Here is another representation, sire, the intention of which is to take from you by degrees the royal authority, and hurl you at last from the throne."

On the 7th of September, 1770, the king, in a bed of justice, ordered the magistracy no longer to employ in their acts the phrase, *unity and indivisibility of the parliaments*, and threatened to abolish them. The parliament, cringing and

courageous at the same time, had three days before acknowledged in its remonstrances, that the magistracy was merely a combination of the king's officers, possessing neither character nor jurisdiction but what it derived from himself. It had declared, that the decrees of the parliament, except in his name, and by his authority, were impotent; and that this authority was in part the work of the parliament. The parliaments, they said, had always humbled the pride of the higher vassals, established the public and royal power, of which these vassals held their tenure; maintained the independence of the state against the ambition of the court of Rome, and preserved in the male line to the eldest of the royal house the succession to the throne. Such was at that time the doctrine of the parliament, but no submission could disarm the monarch, when the magistracy thwarted the royal will. The parliament, as firm as Maupeou, persisted in the cessation of its functions. The menaces of the court increased, the magistrates were ordered to resume their occupations; the parliament, still firmer than before, declared their intention to wait with submission the dangers with which it was threatened, and on the nights of the 19th and 20th of January the blow, that so long had been aimed at them, was struck.

On that night all the magistrates were roused from their sleep at the same hour in the name of the king. An order to resume their functions was presented to them by some of the royal guards, and a positive answer required as to their compliance. Some obeyed, but, united next day in a body, they unanimously retracted. The following night both the magistrates who had retracted and those who had refused were again called up; a decree of the council was notified to them declaring their places to be confiscated; the guards, charged with the king's orders, exiled and dispersed them, and in the place of the parliament was installed the great council, its enemy. The archbishop of Paris celebrated himself what is called the *red mass*, and appointed as officiating clerk to the new magistracy his own nephew the abbé Beaumont. But no measure could ennoble this parliament, called in derision *the Maupeou parliament*: from the day of its institution it was treated by a considerable party in the nation with the utmost contempt: the princes of the blood, members by their rank of the sovereign courts, dared neither to favour it, nor to take part with the general discontent which manifested itself against it. The count de la Marche alone, that same prince of Conty who remained in France during

administration could suffer no representations, made with whatever respect, nor the smallest opposition to the enregistering of its acts: and thus the parliaments of Paris, the court of the princes and peers as well as the parliaments of the provinces, were dissolved without opposition and almost without inconvenience.

CHAP. IX.

Ministry of the Duke of Aiguillon; he resolves to follow, as far as Circumstances permit, the ancient political Plan of the Cabinet of France and of the deceased Dauphin—Principles of that Prince extracted from the Papers of his Son Lewis XVI.—His Hatred to the House of Austria; his Friendship for the Secondary Powers; the Duke of Aiguillon crossed in the Execution of this Plan, by the Weakness of the King and the Marriage of the Dauphin—System of the Duke of Aiguillon relatively to Austria, England, the secondary Powers, Sweden and Denmark, the Swiss and the Court of Rome—He accelerates the Revolution in Sweden, and, to execute it, recals Vergennes from Burgundy, who had been disgraced—He represses the anarchical System fomented in Sweden by the Courts of Russia, Berlin, and Vienna—Revolution in Sweden in Favour of the Authority of the King and of the French Party.

AFTER this piece of policy, the council, standing in want of an administration active, vigilant, and determined to support it, the king appointed the duke of Aiguillon minister of foreign affairs. It has been seen how the whole magistracy of the kingdom, excited against him by the duke of Choiseul, had wished to disparage his talents, to dishonour his name, and

to incapacitate him for the ministry by defamatory expressions, which tended legally to class him with the exactors and plunderers of public property. It was therefore the interest of the duke of Aiguillon to render insignificant a magistracy which, to effect the ruin of a peer of France, had blindly given itself over to contests prompted by the duke of Choiseul and the agents of the court of Vienna.

Occupied in a plan of diplomacy, Aiguillon laboured in silence to moderate the forced and unnatural system of the duke of Choiseul, as much as the alliance of 1756 would permit him. Maria Antoinetta already assumed over the dauphin a decided empire; besides the death of the king might be near, since, notwithstanding his advanced age, he would not be debarred of any pleasure. The old age of the king, and the youth of the dauphiness, were two insurmountable obstacles to the re-establishment of the ancient principles in their integrity, and to the maintenance of the independence of France, which the treaty of 1756 had so far brought into question, that the spirit and dignity of the nation existed not but in its history, in the remembrance of the past, and in the memoirs of the deceased dauphin; so much had this treaty, the presence of the archduchess at the court of France, the follies of the duke of Choiseul, and the la-

mentable death of the dauphin, attached their minds to new plans. The court of Vienna, which had with impunity assumed in Europe the situation possessed by ourselves before the fatal alliance, now held there a language and tone which had hitherto belonged to us. This may be judged of from the nature of a memoir of the dauphin relating to the government, the political part of which we shall here insert, as the duke of Aiguillon proposed to make it the aim of his conduct in his administration.

"I shall reduce into a small compass," says this prince, "the maxims of my house, relating to this subject, the first and the most important of all.

"I ought unceasingly to remember, that a thousand governments have been annihilated; that many royal families are extinguished in Europe, and that the principal states which environ me, are the rivals of the house of Bourbon.

"History acknowledges the two principal of these, *England* and *Austria*.

"England is of the two rivals the least formidable. France ought to bear in mind, that she may have or not have a marine; for the powers which do not possess any, yet do well by their agriculture, their commerce, and their natural industry. We have been formidable and held in high consideration, even without

a marine, during the ministry of cardinal Fleury, to whom my father wholly surrendered up the care of the government.

"That England then has a greater or less preponderance by sea, can only increase or diminish in a certain degree our well-being, without doing us any essential injury: England alone ought to consider her commerce as essential to the maintenance of her actual situation: England is not, therefore, a rival materially to be feared.

"But Austria has many other titles and means hostile and dangerous to us; it is our interest to watch her, to encompass her about, and prevent her from injuring us; for her politics always go farther than her religion wishes; she is a modern power of Europe, which we have seen spring from nothing, and which aspired even to universal monarchy under Charles V., to the injury of her neighbours, and to our imminent peril.

"I must endeavour to discover in the history of my ancestors, by what means they have recovered from that house, *Spain*, *Naples*, *Lorraine*, part of the *Low Countries*, *Alsace*, *Franche-Comté*, and *Roussillon*; and I must not forget, that if I maintain not that political vigilance, Austria will retake from me what she took from my ancestors since the commencement of her ex-

istence, which is not very ancient. And it is remembered what France was under Charlemagne.

" My ancestors, those at least of my branch of the house, had been firmly attached to the principles delivered above, when there arrived in France a man, a Lorrain both in heart and origin, who is the cause at this moment of the troubles of that country. The duke of Choiseul, a pensioner of the house of Austria, has conceived the idea of reviving the plans of the abbé Bernis, whose interest it was to please Austria. Both these men have laid the foundation of the greatest calamities which can fall on my house, should Austrian principles ever prevail in it. The duke of Saint-Simon caused to be communicated to me ten years ago, a memoir well drawn up on this subject, where he proves that France cannot support herself without perpetually combating the house of Austria: it will be found among my papers. He proves that its aggrandisement is only to be prevented by reducing it to the state of a mere electorate.

" My father, however, on principles which I cannot permit myself to censure, has formed an alliance with the house of Austria, to the injury of the interests of the lesser powers, which my ancestors made it their glory to support and protect; he has never wished to examine into

the culpable rashness of M. de Choiseul, who has overturned an edifice confirmed by ages, by the best-informed statesmen, and those most cordially attached to our house.

"We ought, without doubt, most religiously to observe treaties; but delicacy has limits, and when the state shall have discovered by experience how burdensome to the subjects a treaty is, which binds the hands of France—of France, which possesses no life but by virtue of the exercise of her military power; undoubtedly limits will be given, without a declaration of war against the emperor, to a treaty which circumscribes us on every hand, and prevents us from being Frenchmen."

Such were the sentiments of the dauphin, the worthy heir in this respect of Henry IV., Lewis XIII., and Lewis XIV.; for we have seen how he appreciated the political plan which had rendered his house powerful and respected. Aiguillon, with the firm and persevering character with which he was endued, had done every thing to re-establish this plan; but the duke of Choiseul had so completely destroyed its foundations, he had so well profited from the nullity of character of Lewis XV. during the anticipated old age of that prince, that he no-where found any way open towards the re-establishment of the ancient plan. See, however, what the duke of

Aiguillon proposed to effect, in seizing the opportunities most favourable to realize the views of the dauphin.

1st, Austria, proud of her successes, and of having bound France to her ear, shamefully abused her situation; Aiguillon resolved to take advantage of her faults, to demonstrate the mistake of an alliance so illusory and ridiculous as that of the two courts of Vienna and Versailles.

2d, The lesser powers in former times, protected by the court of France, were frightened from the grand alliance; Aiguillon resolved to listen to them, to treat them kindly, to give them encouragement and confidence, and to relieve them from that state of perpetual inquietude in which they had been since 1756.

Denmark and Sweden were not on an amicable footing; our enemies maintained between these two powers a vain and ancient rivalry; it was the duty of France to reunite them, and to strengthen by real friendship the bonds which it was in her power to renew between them.

The duke of Choiseul had treated extremely ill the Swiss, our ancient allies. He molested them by opening the port of Versoix, on the lake of Geneva; he was so enraged against the whole Helvetic nation, that he said of a despicable fellow, that he was as vile as a Swiss, which,

added he, is saying a great deal. The duke of Aiguillon caused the disquieting works of Versoix to cease.

The duke of Choiseul had taken from the pope the county of Venaissin, and the town of Avignon; he said in his reports to Lewis XV., that the loss of the colonies would thus be compensated. The duke of Aiguillon, born with opposite principles of religion, restored to Ganganelly the county and the town of Avignon.

England, seeing us attached to the house of Austria, devoted herself to the house of Brandenbourg. To satisfy her animosity, she had contributed to the seven-years' continental war, in favour of Frederic II., whom Choiseul had wished to dethrone in his fits of folly; and now the duke of Aiguillon meditated a peace and a treaty of commerce with England, which should renew between the two powers that long peace still recollected, and which had remained during thirty years, from the peace of Utrecht, under Lewis XIV., till the war of 1741. Such were the general views of the duke of Aiguillon, in the department which was entrusted to him. He began to execute them relatively to Sweden, that ancient and faithful ally of the north, with whom France, in former times, had effected such great things.

Sweden, since the famous expeditions of

Charles XII., terrified at the military reign of that prince, had embraced every means to repress the royal authority. Her factions listened to Russia, Austria, Denmark, and the king of Prussia, to the injury of the authority of the king. France, which formerly had possessed all the influence that these powers now enjoyed in Sweden, was no longer listened to as under the great Gustavus Adolphus. The court of Vienna, with its treaties of 1756 and 1758, had seized every advantageous situation, from which these treaties had expelled us, in such a manner, that it was difficult to recover influence at Stockholm, otherwise than by a revolution which should re-establish the king of Sweden in all his authority, and destroy the system of disorder and anarchy fomented in Sweden by the courts of Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburgh.

Gustavus III. was the first of the Swedish kings who blushed to see himself the sport of all his neighbours, and who resolved to rouse himself from that humiliating situation. He had sounded the duke of Choiseul before his exile, and while he himself was yet hereditary prince; but that minister was on his guard, taking care how he acquiesced in any project contrary to the interest of the court of Vienna. After the exile of the duke, the king, who managed during several months the department of foreign affairs, listened to Gustavus

more favourably; but before the ministry of the duke of Aiguillon, Gustavus had not received any positive promise on this subject from the cabinet of Versailles. In the different memoirs which he himself presented to Lewis XV., during his visit to Paris, profiting from the troubles of the magistracy and its insurrection in France against the royal authority, he gave Lewis XV. to understand, that the time was arrived to repress in Europe the power of the magistracies, always increasing to the injury of the authority of the kings. He represented the administration of the Swedish kingdom, as opposed on every hand by the usurped authority of the senate, and by that of the factions who governed there, and said he was incapable of concluding any treaty with France, without having previously negotiated with several considerable noblemen on whom he depended. This prince was careful not to touch on our alliance with the court of Vienna, that treaty being still the favourite act of Lewis XV.: Gustavus only shewed, in the treaties which he projected, their simple relations to the empire of Russia, and to the king of Prussia, whose preponderance at Stockholm were more evidently contrary to the interests of the French monarchy. Such were the motives of the memoirs presented to Lewis XV. by Gustavus.

Aiguillon become minister, found, in the propositions of this prince, views favourable to his plans, and resolved to do every thing to re-establish him in the plenitude of royal authority, and to sacrifice every thing for the abolition of the aristocratic authority. Accordingly, notwithstanding the distress of the finances of France, he resolved to pay to that prince all the arrears of the ancient subsidies which were due to him, to assist him to support his party and to restore to that power its independence of the Prussians and Russians.

Choiseul had recalled from Constantinople and had kept in disgrace the count of Vergennes, for reasons which will be stated hereafter; the duke of Aiguillon recalled from Burgundy this meritorious statesman, having destined him to execute his plans relating to the court of Sweden, and to direct Gustavus, who, in his youth, stood in want of a prudent and faithful counsellor. Thus the duke of Choiseul had reunited the great states in favour of the court of Vienna, to govern, divide, and usurp over the weak; and now Aiguillon assisted the weak states in conformity to the plan of the dauphin, and to the ancient French diplomacy, which consisted simply in this maxim, so fruitful of success and victory—*Assist and protect the weak; humble the strong.*

It is known that the revolution in Sweden restored to king Gustavus the sovereign power which the nobles had shared with him. M. Aiguillon and M. de Vergennes delivered this prince from the guardianship of the factions, which the courts of Berlin, Vienna, and Russia, had made use of to enslave him. France re-established the authority of the government in fifty-four hours, and without effusion of blood, on the 18th of August, 1772.

Lastly, the duke of Choiseul had alienated from France king Frederic, and had associated himself with all his enemies, in order to destroy and share his monarchy: and the duke of Aiguillon had conceived the plan of re-establishing with that prince our ancient friendship.

CHAP. X.

Principal Causes of the first Partition of Poland—Catharine II. treats Poland as a conquered Country, and gives to it her Paramour for a King—Russia quits the Alliance of France and of Vienna, and attaches herself to the King of Prussia, the secret Enemy of Louis XV.—Resentment of the Duke of Choiseul, who excites the Turks against Russia—Discomfiture of the Turks—Brilliant successes of Russia—Terror of Austria, which seeks the Friendship of the Court of Berlin—Re-union of the three Courts against Poland—Partition of Poland—Nullity of France allied to Austria—Resentment of her Cabinet against Austria—Memoir of the Duke of Aiguillon, read to the Council of the King, tending to break with Austria.

WHILST the duke of Aiguillon boldly elevated in Sweden the French party, the three cabinets of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, divided Poland, the ancient friend of the French. Indignant Europe yet recollects the iron sceptre which the imperious Catherine extended over even the interior of those states, which had the misfortune to be her neighbours, and could not measure their forces with hers.

That princess had forced Poland to accept for a king, Poniatowski, who was remarkable for

nothing but his beauty, his youth, and his quality of being the lover of Catharine; and from the time she was assured that a king of mere show reigned at Warsaw, she prepared to usurp his possessions.

After the seven-years' war, the duke of Choiseul saw only in the first friendship of the courts of Russia and Berlin, a simple defection of Catharine from the alliance of Vienna and Versailles, which that minister regarded as the most sacred of his operations, because it was the source of his grandeur and his fortune. The court of Vienna was besides terrified to find herself without real alliance; the re-union of the cabinet of Russia to that of Berlin, and the state of nullity into which the court of France had fallen, gradually overturned the plan of prince Kaunitz.

It was under this circumstance that the duke of Choiseul had commanded M. de Vergennes, French ambassador at Constantinople, to excite the Porte to hostilities against Catharine. Vergennes, who saw in this war the ruin of the Porte, represented the danger of it, and irritated the duke of Choiseul, who persisted in demanding a war. Vergennes spoke more clearly, and announced the defeat and all the subsequent disasters experienced by the Ottoman empire.—M. de Choiseul, offended at so premature declara-

tion, recalled him, and obliged him to retire into Burgundy without credit or employment, in recompense of his patriotism and veracity.

The successes of Russia quickly increased the solicitude of the court of Vienna. Catharine, having taken possesion of Walachia and Moldavia, seemed to threaten a passage of the Danube. Austria, terrified at the contact of these conquests, with her territorial possessions, sought the friendship of the king of Prussia, who cherished this quarrel by subsidies, and went so far as to solicit an amicable neutrality in case of open war against the successes of the Russians: thus Frederic II., who had so lately fought with France, Russia, and Austria, in arms and united together to dethrone and ruin him, saw in his old age the two imperial courts suing and flattering him in a sort of rivalry to each other; whilst the duke of Choiseul, that criminal instrument of dissensions and war, was exiled to Chanteloup. The grand alliance of the French, Russians, and Austrians, against Frederic, was thus dissolved by the reconciliation of the courts of Vienna and Berlin, and by the weak state of France, exhausted and fallen to the rank of an electorate of the empire or of a secondary power of the south. It was under these circumstances that the partition of Poland manifested itself; Austria commencing it by

introducing her troops into Zips. It is known, that the courts of Berlin and Russia, seeing the meaning of this invasion by the troops of Maria Theresa, took her at her word. It is known also, that the three powers, sporting with this king of mere show established at Warsaw, equally introduced their troops into Poland, and, in an amicable manner, divided amongst them the cities and provinces of the most ancient and most essential of our allies of the North.

Nothing could equal at Versailles the deep and fruitless resentment of the council against the court of Vienna; M. d'Aiguillon developed its perfidy with all the energy of which he was capable: "See," said he, "what faith may be placed in the friendship of Austria, and what we must expect from a house allied to the king by the double bond of a treaty and a marriage! One day the court of Vienna wishes to increase her possessions *at the expence of the king of Prussia*, and then she excites against that prince, conjointly with France, both Russia and Sweden *; another day she wishes to increase her dominions *at the expence of Poland*, our best friend, and then she courts the friendship of the king of Prussia, the enemy of France, and allies

* Thence, the seven-years' war.

herself with him and with the czarina, who is more than ever envenomed against us *.

"On the other hand, nothing can surpass the boundless ambition of the young emperor Joseph II., who only waits the moment of reigning alone, to develope the system which he meditates: he has distant views relatively to Bavaria; he covets the Venetian Friuli; he wishes to open the Scheldt, shut by so many treaties; he desires the possession of Bosnia: and who can tell us that he has forgotten the loss of Lorraine, Alsace, and Silesia †? He who dares to tear from us the best of our friends, and despoil her of her domains, is he not capable of again seizing, if he were able, the possessions which we have taken from him? He who despises an alliance so important as that of the court of Versailles, to effect unheard-of usurpations to our injury, is he not capable of forming engagements against us? The result of our alliance with the court of Vienna, of that alliance which has so much exhausted us of men and of money, is, that we are *without friends*, and that there exists *a most formidable league in the north of Europe against us*, that of Vienna, Berlin,

* Thence, the partition of Poland, in which France is the only European power that has really lost in the federative system depending on her relative situation.

† All our correspondences, all our information announced in him these different projects.

and St. Petersburgh. At a moment's warning, these three powers may place on foot three hundred thousand men; in the twinkling of an eye, they may establish themselves at discretion on the territories of the weak powers that still remain to be invaded by them; in the twinkling of an eye, they may complete the entire destruction of Poland. France, *without allies*, France with few means of actual resistance, France exhausted by the last war, undertaken for the maintenance of the house of Austria and to favour the recovery of its dominions, finds herself *in a crisis the most perplexing*;—is reduced to the most humiliating silence; is obliged to repress her proper character, and only to develope that of a nation benevolently observant, which approves whatever is now doing, without their having deigned to consult her. What then are become of those times, when it was not permitted in Europe to fire one shot from a cannon without the permission of the king?

"But, however critical the political situation of France may be, there nevertheless remains to her resourses equal, perhaps superior, to those of the northern league. But how many prejudices, both real and exaggerated, have we not to do away, in order to prepare an alliance with a power whose friendship is at this moment necessary to the king to repress the projects of

the northern courts? If we wish to unite ourselves with the court of London, what sources of enmity have we to dry up, how many prejudices to overcome? It may be proved, that the cabinet of St. James's is persuaded that M. de Choiseul was concerned in the troubles of Wilkes; it may be proved, that that cabinet considers us as no stranger to the troubles of America. The character of M. de Choiseul, and the war which he has wished to excite once more against England, under circumstances in which the state of European affairs might have facilitated an urgent and necessary reconciliation, would be sufficient to hold the court of London in the apprehension that we are always its enemies.

"Notwithstanding this state of affairs with the English court, the aspect of the north in arms, re-united, allied, and usurping the dominions of our friends, obliges me to propose to the king a counter-league of the south, composed of France, Spain, England, and Sardinia. The new bonds which unite us with the king of Sardinia ensure his friendship. Spain will perhaps be gained over with more difficulty, because M. de Choiseul has singularly exasperated that power, both against the court of London, and against my ministry. As to the king of England, what means have we not to moderate that perpetual struggle and that hostile rivalry which counteract our commercial interests? I proceed to ex-

plain his interests relatively to the partition of Poland.

"All Europe is persuaded that this partition changes the Prussian monarchy into a power truly maritime. From a state of a military and agricultural monarchy, it passes to a state of a commercial and maritime power; and as, in a few years, we have seen the king of Prussia usurp the provinces of neighbours more powerful than himself; as we have seen him since defend them against the whole of Europe, which wished to recover them from him; in a few years also, we may see him, by means of his parsimony and activity, become *master of the Baltic*. While Dantzick is in his possession, the Vestula will be to him a new Thames; so that this power, so slightly considered and so little known a few years ago, may become under Frederic a state formidable to the maritime as to the continental powers. England knows this, and that nation is so enlightened relatively to its commerce and its maritime interests, that there exists at this moment in London an extraordinary and signal dissatisfaction at this change of the Prussian power into a commercial and maritime state *.

* The duke of Alguillon little knew, it would appear, the real projects of Frederic. A great commercial maritime power without a military marine, is an ideal and impossible power, and Prussia has too much to do and to expend on the conti-

"Russia, on the other hand, menacing Constantinople and seriously manifesting projects relating to the navigation of the Black Sea, and perhaps to that of the Mediterranean, may draw away in these countries all the maritime commerce of the English. How numerous then are the grounds for an alliance against the northern league? How many means do we possess for inducing the English to assist us against the dangers which threaten them, and which threaten us with them? I propose these views to the wisdom of the king; and since the north is leagued and armed against our friends, since Austria abandons us to our own resources, I find nothing to oppose to this threatening league, but the alliance of the four powers, capable of counterbalancing it: *France*, *England*, *Spain*, and *Sardinia*. I will develope the basis of this alliance in future memoirs."

nent, to think of rivalling Great Britain, all the strength, plans, and occupations of which have for aim the success of its marine. Frederic even rejected several projects of commerce in India and China, for which the associated adventurers only requested his royal protection; the king did not wish to guarantee these enterprises against the future jealousy of the other possessors of islands and coasts which command the sea: "Unless a nation," said Frederic, "has a hundred ships of the line, and a hundred thousand sailors, it ought not to expose itself on the ocean." These fears were exaggerated; for the Venetians, the Genoese, and Dutch, with a continental power much less formidable than that of Prussia, were commercial and maritime. The king of Prussia, besides, had on the continent a sufficient strength to cause his maritime power to be respected; and it is possible that Prussia one day may think of extending her commerce by sea.

CHAP. XI.

The Partition of Poland re-kindles the Hatred of the Party of M. de Choiseul, which attributes it to the Negligence of the Duke of Aiguillon—Resentment of the Duke of Aiguillon, who analyses the Ministry of the Duke of Choiseul, of which he proves the Partition of Poland to be the Result.

THE partition of Poland, while it developed the perfidies of the court of Vienna relatively to France, made manifest also those of the duke of Choiseul in favour of Maria Theresa. The most enlightened part of the nation saw nothing in the events of Poland but a simple result of the wars, negotiations, treaties, and alliances of that minister. The distressed state in which he left affairs, confirmed all minds in the belief, that he had been at Versailles little better than the first deputy of the court of Vienna. From the seclusion of his exile, the duke observed in silence the tendency of opinions on this subject, and strove, according to his interest, to rectify, or combat, or counterbalance, or render them more favourable to him by the assistance of the powerful friends whom he had left at court.

It is said by his partisans, that when the news of the partition of Poland arrived at Paris, the king, complaining of it, expressed himself in these words: *If M. de Choiseul had been in place, he would have prevented this partition.*

On the other hand, the resentment of the duke of Aiguillon, in consequence of these expressions, determined that minister to present a memorial to the king, in which he demonstated to him *that the partition of Poland was the evident and necessary result of the political system of the duke of Choiseul.*

"It is easy," said M. d'Aiguillon, "for the creatures and the friends of the last minister to advance, that the partition of Poland is the work of my ministry; it is easy for them to censure this same ministry, since it only presents to Europe a system purely observant with regard to the events of the north; it is easy to attribute to the king expressions agreeable to their wishes on this subject, and to spread them through the capital: but, on my part, it will also be easy to prove, that these events are the necessary consequence of whatever has been done in the department of foreign affairs, and principally of what has been done there in darkness, without the participation of the king.

"We are in a state, it is said, purely observ-

ant with regard to the powers who divide with impunity the possessions of Poland. This is an afflicting truth; but is it the present minister who has brought us into this situation? It is well known to the king, that the charges of the last war, which M. de Choiseul wished to direct and prolong at pleasure, and the expences of ministers, have obliged his majesty to wink at what might lead to a declaration of war; the prodigal system of M. de Choiseul, and the war which he has so ill conducted both by land and by sea, have persuaded the powers of the north that they may attempt every thing and effect every thing with impunity, because there remains to us no pecuniary resources for the execution of the means which we may have to oppose to their projects of partition and usurpation.

"It is supposed on the other hand, that we had at least the resource of alliances: it is said, that we may effect by negotiations and treaties, what we cannot obtain by force. Alas! the system of the last minister has deprived the king of this resource also. Let us attend for a moment to facts.

"A league has been formed between Austria, Prussia, and Russia; but this league is so much the result of past operations, that it was impossible for the cabinet, when I was called into it, to oppose an interest equivalent to that

which all our anterior operations had favoured. Can we treat with Russia? M. de Choiseul has armed the Turks against that power, and he is suspected, at Petersburgh, of having excited the troubles which have hazarded the repose of Catharine.

" Can we form an alliance with the Turks? Reduced to the most deplorable situation, they execrate the confidence which they reposed in us; by declaring war, at our instigation, against a power which now dictates to them laws so hard.

" Can we by an alliance inspire other sentiments into the king of Prussia? I know not the motives which have induced the king to direct against him all the resources of his kingdom; but that prince has not yet laid aside his resentment against the ministry of M. de Choiseul, by whom all Europe was excited against a prince, whom we had supported with all our power in the war of 1741.

" What can we attempt with the house of Austria, in order to prevent the dismemberment of Poland? Is it not evident that the empress, contented with having bound our hands by the treaty of 1756, and with having made use of our money and troops in attempting to dethrone the king of Prussia, has only an inte-

rested and transitory friendship for us? since she now abandons us to our own resources, in order to unite herself with Prussia, which she has not been able to annihilate, and to endeavour to effect with that power what circumstances have not permitted her to execute with us. In implicitly binding ourselves over to the court of Vienna, we have used our strength for its private purposes, and have placed that court in the immoral situation of a faithless ally, that wishes, with our money and armies, to reconquer Silesia, or to seize Poland, in concert with the Russian and Prussian troops. France hereafter cannot consider these events as a mere partition of the territory of Poland, but rather as a partition of the federative and political power of the king, in which Maria Theresa is at least an accomplice.

"Thus when his majesty did me the honour to call me to the ministry, I found all the cabinets of Europe alienated, displeased, engaged in foreign alliances, and little disposed to form new ones with us. In this state of displeasure they have coalesced against our friends, and I have secretly agreed to execute a plan of partition, which cannot be the result of the negligence of the present minister, but rather of the activity of M. de Choiseul, in sacrificing the political

interests of France to the powers to which we have seen him so long devoted, and to that destructive system, the ravages of which the king has repressed by displacing a minister who so constantly neglected the interests of the sovereign and those of his friends."

CHAP. XII.

Portrait of the Duke of Aiguillon and a Delineation of his Administration in Bretany, by the Duke of Choiseul—The latter accuses M. d'Aiguillon, and exculpates himself from having wished to ruin him during his famous Trial.

EXILED to his estate at Chanteloup, M. de Choiseul sent to his friends malicious portraits of the princes of the royal family, and of individual noblemen who had contributed to his present misfortunes, or with whom he had lived on ill terms at court. He wrote at the same time memoirs of his administration, which will undoubtedly be published: the fragments of them which we possess, induce us to wish for the rest, not certainly as a monument capable of deciding the question, but as a historical piece produced by the leader of a party, who accuses another. Historians will consult them impartially, as magistrates listen to two adversaries before they pronounce on the equity of the case. "The fear of the duke of Aiguillon," says the duke of Choiseul, "like that of poltroons and intriguers, prevents him from reasoning justly . . . . . The method

of M. d'Aiguillon is to propose to others, during his ministry, the places which he wishes for. This plan, however, is incomprehensible. It is as *brutal*, as false. M. d'Aiguillon said, that I had wished to ruin him in his trial concerning Bretany, whilst M. Duchatelet, our common friend, assured him, on the contrary, that I had supposed it impossible he should not triumph over the criminal process which had been excited against him. Such was really my opinion: I always believed that M. d'Aiguillon had not divested himself, during his command, of the wretched propensity to despotism, to *low revenge*, and even to *cruelty*, with which he was born; I knew that the first motive of all the vexations which had been inflicted in Bretany, and of the troubles which he had excited there, was that of revenging himself on M. de la Chalotais, who had written, after the affair of Saint-Cast, *that the troops and the Bretons were covered with glory, and their general with meal.* M. d'Aiguillon, during the affair, had actually retired, by way of precaution, into a mill. I was not ignorant that this sarcasm, known to M. d'Aiguillon, excited his revengeful fury. He wrote to Lewis XV. that M. de la Chalotais spoke horrid things of that prince. I have had proofs of whatever was reprehensible and odious

in the conduct of M. d'Aiguillon in Bretany; but at the same time I knew well, that in a criminal process, judgment could only be formed of facts, and not of intentions; and as to the facts in question, I was certain that the duke of Aiguillon had for each, the orders of the king from his own hand, or signed by M. de la Vrillière, and that if any were wanting, he could procure them antidated. He had persuaded the king, that he was the martyr of his authority, and of his devotedness to his royal person. I was further persuaded, that it would have been much better for M. d'Aiguillon, if his trial had been continued and terminated in the court of peers, as it had been commenced there. On that occasion, he was the dupe of the chancellor, who frightened him, as well as his timorous mistress Dubarry, in order to render himself more necessary to both, and to acquire a preponderance of influence; while at the same time, by deviating, without rhyme or reason, from all forms of regularity, he would bring forward his process of private revenge against the parliaments: such was the light in which I viewed the transaction. I thought that M. d'Aiguillon had *dishonoured* himself, and I still believe it; but I did not believe that he ought to be hanged on that account. M. d'Aiguillon may complain of my

opinion of his conduct, but not of my wish, or of my desire of his being punished *."

Such were the expressions which the duke of Choiseul made use of against the duke of Aiguillon. The latter also had too much revenge in his heart, not to make known his opinions of his great antagonist. They will be found in the memoirs of the duke of Aiguillon which I have published, and of which the notes were given to count Mirabeau by marshal Richlieu. An idea may be formed from the comparison of the two writings, how much characteristic animosity and point the two ministers displayed in their quarrels. The ill consequences of these dissensions were so much the more serious, as they had for objects questions of state, of religion, and of public right. They shook the state to its centre, and contributed, with other causes, to change the condition of France, after the commencement of the following reign.

* The most prevalent opinion was, that, but for the military seizure of the papers of the duke of Aiguillon by Lewis XV., that courtier would have been ruined. In political affairs, the parliament invariably condemned the contrary party. Of an hundred processes, Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, lost ninety-nine. He actually gained of them one in his life.

CHAP. XIII.

Comparison of the State Maxims of the Duke of Aiguillon and those of the Duke of Choiseul—Bon Mot of Mirabeau on this Subject—Portraits of Madame de Choiseul, and of the late Madame d'Aiguillon.

THE duke of Choiseul, from the commencement of his ministry, had secretly protected philosophy and infidelity, which hitherto had been persecuted; and the duke of Aiguillon, devoted to the religious party, did not cease to persecute the rising philosophy, according to the ancient maxims of the state. He was seen to frequent the church of Saint-Sulpice, and there to erect a pulpit and several altars.

The duke of Choiseul abolished in France the diplomatic system of the house of Bourbon and of cardinal Richlieu, and the duke of Aiguillon expected to be its disciple and continuator.

The duke of Choiseul was devoted to the parliaments; which, in acknowledgment, consented to become a species of board of commission to his orders, especially in the affairs of the duke of Aiguillon, of general Lally, and

of the jesuits, though he washed his hands of them in his memoirs; and the duke of Aiguillon, criminally prosecuted by the magistracy, thought only of destroying it, in order to elude its projects of destruction to his house, one of the pillars of ancient despotism.

The duke of Choiseul had given proofs of attachment to liberty, to the rights and usages of nations, and to the prerogatives of parliaments against absolute power. These rights and these prerogatives were the bases established to accuse and ruin his enemy; and M. d'Aiguillon, heir to the system of his grand-uncle, of *that system, which had for its exterior aim, to elevate the lesser states, and to humiliate the great powers; and to elevate in the interior, the great power of the state, and to humiliate the lesser authorities*; was the advocate for military and absolute authority. Count Mirabeau, the historian of the duke of Aiguillon, so thoroughly understood the singular play of the interests of the two factions, in state affairs, that he afterwards, in the constituent assembly, described it in very few words; and those suited to the peculiar turn of his conceptions. "In this contest," said he, "these factions had the clergy and parliament for their weapons." It was thus, in fact, that the two parties carried on reciprocal hostilities: especially all, towards the transition from one reign to the

other; a circumstance in which both had an equal concern.

The duke of Choiseul befriended the jansenists; and, at the same time, was the patron of the philosophers. But, he befriended the jansenists, because they were in the interests of the parliaments, and the declared enemies of the jesuits: and he was the patron of the philosophers, because, in an equal degree, they opposed the jesuits. In this manner did the duke of Choiseul direct the operations of two opposite parties, of two sects at variance, equally at the disposal of a statesman, against the jesuits, his principal enemies. And M. d'Aiguillon, not less consistent in the support of the organisation of his system in opposition to the above, was the avowed enemy of the jansenists, as of the philosophers, by the inevitable rules of contradiction.

As the duke of Choiseul had established the power of Maria Antoinetta, he was to be protected by her under all circumstances; and, by the same rule of opposition, this princess was to dismiss the duke of Aiguillon, from the moment she might come into any share of power.

The duke of Choiseul was, secretly, the enemy of Lewis XVI. He exposed this prince to contempt and public ridicule, in a kind of farce, which he printed with English types at Chante-

loup, during his exile. He was an enemy to the aunts, the father, and mother, of the king, and to their adherents. Upon him fell all the hatred of that powerful party. He was supported by none but the queen and the Orleans family. The duke of Aiguillon, on the other hand, was hated or opposed, in the contrary ratio; with the exception of Lewis XVI.; who, according to the rule of conduct he had laid down for himself, in what related to the court of Vienna, would have been devoted to him, had not that prince derived equal advantages to any he might have rendered from the services of M. M. de Maurepas and de Vergennes; who professed those sentiments without which he could not fulfil the intentions of his father the dauphin, and which he would have found in the duke of Aiguillon.

The duke of Choiseul had made choice of a very young wife, who evinced, like him and towards him, a very exalted character. Madame de Choiseul possessed courage, patience, and resignation;—but was as proud as her husband during the disgrace of her family. She wished, in person, to defend her husband against the last acts of injustice of Lewis XV. As a woman of generous and liberal sentiments, she forgave him many disgusting infidelities, which took place soon after he married her, in her early youth,

sacrificing a large fortune, after his disgrace, and above all after his death, to pay his creditors, she resolved for this purpose to confine herself to mere necessaries. She accordingly retired to a convent, and exposed herself to the want of even those necessaries, though she had been born in the midst of the greatest opulence under the old government. These, surely, are testimonies highly favourable to the memory of her husband. During the revolution, she was seen to support the same elevation of mind. Ever prudent, ever courageous, and patient under sufferings, were not her great name and illustrious example models for imitation, during that emigration to which France attributes a portion of its calamities?

The duke of Aiguillon, on the contrary, chose a wife of a quite different disposition: plain, timid, silent, and reserved, in her deportment; but possessed of virtue and sensibility. During the revolution, she displayed the same patience as madame de Choiseul, but with a very different character, and different talents; refusing to emigrate with her son and the rest of her family, even after the tenth of August; having learned, like madame de Choiseul, how to risk and support the dangerous storms of a court.

With regard to the two husbands, neither of

them witnessed the revolution for which France had been prepared by the excessive violence of their measures: they both had ended their career in a remarkable manner, before that revolution was seen to explode.

The duke of Choiseul, ruined by debt, and a prey to ambition, had recourse to self-destruction, by multiplied and forced voluptuous enjoyments. The disgrace of the duke of Aiguillon produced a different effect: he was seized by a disorder but seldom met with, though not unknown. His bones became soft. The duke of Choiseul's ambition had been repressed by the king, who invariably repelled him from administration with astonishing firmness: the ambition of the duke of Aiguillon was restrained with equal firmness by the queen, carrying the effects of grief into the very marrow of his bones, his legs, thighs, and skull, became soft, flexible, and pliant, like wax in the dog-days.

CHAP. XIV.

End of Lewis XV.—A Libertine Party at Trianor occasions his Death—One Faction insists on his receiving the Sacraments, which another Faction opposes—Conduct, on this Head, of Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris—Reasons alleged by one Party why he ought to receive the Sacraments—Reasons why he ought not—The King receives the Sacraments—A dreadful Complication of various and shameful Disorders puts a Period to his Existence.

THE influence of France over the potentates of Europe, formerly so habituated to respect, to fear us, and court our alliance, was much weakened when the king, allured to Trianor by a libertine party, was seized by a disorder which proved mortal.

It was in vain that confidential surgeons presided over the pleasures of the sovereign, and selected, for the *parc aux cerfs*, the young women who were kept in that haram: the king, on this occasion, gave himself up, at a venture, to a young girl who took his fancy, and who had taken the small-pox but a few hours before. She infused it, a second time, into the blood of this sovereign, who, during his youth, had had

that disorder. On his side, the king gave her, in exchange, the half-cured distemper which had slowly preyed on his health for several years, and which had resisted the effects of every medicine that could be devised. History must affix an indelible stigma on the surgeons of the latter age of Lewis the XVth.: they did not dare to condemn the inhuman opinion into which he had been persuaded by marshal Richlieu, Bertin, and Lebel. "To disperse the king's disorder, and communicate it to young girls who are robust, lively, and in sound health," said they, "is the only remaining specific for extracting the morbific humours of the king, and renewing the vigour of youth."

The close of so licentious a life, and of a disastrous reign, was now at hand. France, disgraced without, and wretched within, was soon to get rid of a king whose reign, from its commencement in 1715, had lasted fifty-nine years. All that remained for this prince, during his shocking and mortal distemper, was to shew some signs of repentance, in order to excite respect for a few minutes: but the views of the factions which distracted the state were obstacles to these demonstrations of repentance, required by the religion of Lewis XV.: two parties declared themselves at his court in 1774, as during

his sickness at Metz, thirty years before; one party insisting that the king should receive the sacraments, whilst the other endeavoured to deprive him of them.

Christopher de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, a zealous advocate for frequent communion, had arrived from Paris, with the determination of soliciting, in public, the king's admission to the sacraments; and, privately, doing all in his power to retard the measure. This ceremony could not take place, without the public and prior expulsion of the concubine, agreeably to the ecclesiastical canons, and the jesuit party, of which Christopher was the leader: this party, which had made a tool of madame Dubarry to annihilate the parliaments, to support the duke of Aiguillon, and to ruin the factions of the Choiseuls, was very averse to disgracing her in a canonical manner, after services of so very distinguished a nature. The archbishop of Paris had invariably and loudly declared, on all occasions, that she had rendered the most essential services to the cause of religion. This Molinist party was joined by the dukes of Richlieu, Fronsac, and Aiguillon; as well as by Bertin, Meaupeou, and Terray. As madame Dubarry was their advocate with a weak and pusillanimous king, they were bound to

defend her, to prevent such disgrace and revenge as, in a similar case, the duchess of Chateauroux had planned, in 1745.

The opposite party of the Choiseuls, active in all directions, was, on the contrary, eager to accelerate a religious ceremony, which would reduce that favourite mistress to her original nonentity of power, who had caused the dismission of their leader, the duke of Choiseul. It was laughable to see the party of this man, who was the scourge of religion in France, call in the aid of religion, during the king's illness, in order to be revenged of madame Dubarry; whilst the opposite party, that of the archbishop and of the devotees, was observed to unite their efforts to prevent the communion of Lewis XV. "At this juncture," said the cardinal de Luynes to me, "the conscience and remorse of the sovereign became matters of cool, deliberate brokerage and traffic."

Then there took place a kind of contest at the court; the point in dispute being, "whether the king ought, or ought not, immediately to receive the sacraments?"—"Shall we suffer," said marshal Richlieu, "madame Dubarry to be ignominiously dismissed? Can we at once be unmindful of her services, and expose ourselves to sure revenge at her return? Or, are we to wait till the king's situa-

tion becomes hopeless, before we resolve on her private departure, and proceed, without noise or pomp, to a private administration of the sacraments?"

Such was the ferment, and such the state of men's minds at court, when, on the 1st of May, the archbishop of Paris, for the first time, appeared before the sick monarch, at half past eleven in the morning. No sooner had he reached the door of the king's antichamber, than he was met by marshal Richlieu, who entreated him not to kill the king by a theological interrogatory, which caused the death of so many sick persons. "But, if you are so very desirous of hearing pretty and darling sins," said he to the prelate, "sit down there, my lord; I will confess my sins; and such sins as you never have heard since you have been archbishop of Paris. But, if you are absolutely determined on the king's confession, and renewing the scenes of the archbishop of Soissons at Metz; if you resolve on the public dismission of madam Dubarry; reflect on the consequences, and on your own interest. You are preparing a triumph for the duke of Choiseul, your inveterate enemy, to rid you of whom madame Dubarry so much contributed; and you will persecute YOUR FRIEND to the advantage of your enemy:—Yes, sir, I repeat the words, YOUR FRIEND: and, so tho-

roughly is she your friend, that she yesterday said to me—Let the archbishop be quiet, and a cardinal's hat shall be his. I undertake the business for him, and pledge my word for its success."

The archbishop of Paris readily perceived that the administration of the sacraments would meet with strong opposition. In the king's chamber, he saw madame Adelaïde, the duke of Aumont, the bishop of Senlis, and marshal Richlieu, in conjunction with whom, the archbishop determined to leave confession, for that day, out of the question. This discretion was so agreeable to Lewis XV., that, on the archbishop's retiring, he ordered madame Dubarry to be recalled, whose fair hands he once more tenderly kissed.

On the second of May, the king found himself rather better: madame Dubarry had caused him to be attended by two confidential physicians, Lorry and Bordeu, who had orders to conceal from him the nature of his distemper, and not to inform him of his dangerous predicament; that thus she might keep the clergy at a distance, and prevent a dismission that must have been degrading to her. The improved state of the king's health allowed of her resuming her familiarities with him; and amusing him, as usual, by tricks and sprightly sallies: but la Martinière, who was of the Choiseul

party—la Martinière who still had access to the king, and who took offence at the confidence reposed in Lorry and Bordeu, did not conceal from the sovereign the nature or danger of his distemper. To his questions concerning the nature of the pustules which increased on all sides in a shocking manner, la Martinière gave this answer; "These pustules, sire, are three days in gathering; three days in a state of suppuration; and three days in becoming dry."—The king, remembering that he had had the small-pox, and convinced of the danger of his actual disorder, sent for madame Dubarry, and addressed her in the following words: "My dear, I have the small-pox, and my situation is very critical on account of my age, and other distempers: I must not forget that I am the MOST CHRISTIAN KING, and the OLDEST SON OF THE CHURCH: I am in my sixty-fourth year; in a very short time, perhaps, we must be separated for ever. I wish to guard against a scene similar to that which took place at Metz: tell the duke of Aiguillon what I say to you, that, should my disorder increase, he may concur with you in such measures as may enable us to part without scandal and publicity."

The Jansenists and the duke of Choiseul's party triumphed over the insignificance of the archbishop. They loudly asserted in public

assemblies, that the duke of Aiguillon and the archbishop had determined to let the king die without the sacraments, to suit the convenience of madame Dubarry. Beaumont, irritated by their sarcasms, took the resolution of fixing his abode at Versailles, in the house of the Lazarites, to deceive the public, and avail himself of the king's last moments, so as to turn his ceremonies to account at the proper time, and sacrifice madame Dubarry, when the king should be beyond recovery. He arrived at Versailles on the third of May, but without seeing the king. This prelate no longer retained the impetuous of zeal for which he had been remarkable; nor his accustomed and avowed contempt for all rules of politeness, and the most sanctioned forms of good-breeding, while in the performance of his duty: his only aim was, under given circumstances, to keep in awe the enemies of his party; and, as long as possible, to support the credit of that favoured mistress, who had enabled him to gain the ascendancy over those enemies.

A contrary zeal urged on the bishop of Carcassonne, who was on bad terms with cardinal Roche-Aimon. A spirit of complacency and mean submission had raised the latter to his clerical rank, and to the places he held at court. With less of the monk than of

the courtier in his disposition, he concurred in opinion with the Richlieus and the mistress, that it would be wrong to alarm the monarch by any proposal relative to the administration of the sacraments. With them, he observed, that the bare intimation of the sacraments might make very dangerous impressions on the mind of the king. The bishop of Carcassonne, that second Fitz-James, bishop of Soissons, who had acted the same part at Metz, insisted, on the contrary, that the king should receive the sacraments; that the mistress should be dismissed; that the canons of the church should be enforced; and that the king ought to show an example of repentance to France, and to christian Europe, to which he had given scandal. ——"By what authority do you give me your advice?" said cardinal Roche-Aimon to him.—"There is my authority," answered the bishop of Carcassonne, untying the cross from his breast: "learn the duty, my lord, of respecting this authority; and do not cause your king to die without the sacraments of that church of which the most christian king is the eldest son." In this state of agitation, the scandalous scenes of Metz were on the point of being renewed, when the duke of Aiguillon and the archbishop of Paris, who were present at these debates, thought it pru-

dent to bring them to a termination. Aiguillon went to receive the king's orders in what might relate to madame Dubarry. "Let her be privately conducted to your seat at Ruelle," said the king to him; "I shall deem myself obliged to madame Aiguillon for whatever attentions she may show her."

On the evening of the 4th, madame Dubarry had one more momentary interview with the king, promising to return to court on his recovery: and the dying monarch was observed to seize her hands with his right hand, and to place his left on her bosom, whilst he re-assured her of his regret and pain for the loss of such beloved attractions. Madame Aiguillon placed her in her carriage with the elder miss Dubarry and madame de Serre; and conveyed her to Ruelle, there to wait the event of the king's illness. She had no sooner departed, than the king desired to see her. . . "She is gone," was the answer given to Lewis XV. From that moment his disorder increased. He now considered death as inevitable.

The fifth and sixth days passed, without any mention of confession, the viaticum, or extreme unction. The duke of Fronsac threatened to throw the vicar of Versailles out of a window, should he dare to utter a word on those subjects. From him I have the anecdote. But, at

three o'clock on the morning of the seventh, the king gave the most peremptory orders for the attendance of the abbé Maudoux. The confession lasted seventeen minutes. The dukes of Vrillière and Aiguillon were desirous of deferring the viaticum: but la Martinière, in order to accomplish the expulsion of madame Dubarry, addressed the king in these words: "Sire, I have beheld your majesty in very trying circumstances; but never had so much cause to admire your conduct as on this day: if my opinion has weight, your majesty will immediately complete what has been so well begun." The king again sent for his confessor Madoux, a poor priest who had been assigned him for several years, because he was old and blind. From him the king received absolution.

With regard to the public reparation, wished for by the duke of Choiseul's party, as the means of humbling and solemnly degrading madame Dubarry, it was now out of question. The grand almoner, in conjunction with the archbishop, had drawn up a declaration, which was proclaimed in the following words, in the presence of the viaticum: "Though the king has to account for his conduct to God alone, he declares his repentance for having given scandal to his subjects; and that he is desirous of the prolongation of life only for the

support of religion, and the happiness of his people." After this, the shrine of St. Geneviève was repeatedly taken down and opened, with the view of obtaining his majesty's restoration to health.

During the eighth and ninth, the disorder increased: the king saw every part of his body falling to pieces, or in a state of putrefaction. Forsaken by his friends, and by the crowd of courtiers who had so long cringed before him, he found no consolation but in the filial piety of his daughters.

The abbé Madoux, his confessor, gave equal proofs of his attachment. The king, naturally of a religious turn, and fearful of the judgments of God, expressed his terror at the idea of his fate in another world. At times, his language was that of hope: but it was succeeded by avowals of fear and horror, which aggravated the dreadful symptoms of his distemper. Death, then, became his only prospect; and he talked of nothing but the "abyss of fire," which, he exclaimed, was on the point of being opened, as a punishment for a life that, from first to last, had been luxurious in the extreme. He lived to contemplate the dissolution of his most handsome frame. His arms and thighs were converted into purulent matter: his genitals fell by piece-meal. Yet, on some occasions, he

still expressed his hope in God: but soon he was chilled with fear at the remembrance of his habitual vices; and vowed anew to edify his subjects, should his health be restored: vows similar to those he had made at Metz. He was seen to beat his breast; was heard to call for a crucifix, and for holy-water, which he sprinkled on himself and on his bed, to expel from it imaginary demons. He sent money to the churches of St. Sulpice, Notre-Dame, and the Capuchins, for masses, to be celebrated for the recovery of his health: and he every day caused the shrine of the patroness of Paris to be opened. He had lived in perpetual alternatives of libertinism and devotion; and death seized him in the cruel alternatives of hope and despair.

Before the king expired, the two diseases jointly had changed his body to an infectious carcass. The stench that exhaled from it proved fatal to the servants who performed the last duties. None but the nightmen of Versailles had the courage to place him in a leaden coffin, without balm or aromatics: it was necessary to wrap up this coffin in bran, and to inclose the whole in a double wooden case; then, to carry off the whole by stealth, and to seal the front stone, or entrance, to the tombs of St. Denis. Such was the disease, and such the end, of Lewis XV.

the last king of the Bourbon race who has been allowed to die in his bed.

During the course of his illness, his daughters were distinguished for the tenderness with which they rendered him every possible service. Such was their affectionate zeal, that they appeared in no other light than that of his nurses. They attended him night and day, performing the most disgusting and painful offices. They forgot their rank, their danger, and the delicacy of their feelings, in order to relieve their father to the last sigh. They caught from him his disorder *.

* These particulars relative to the last sickness of Lewis XV. were imparted to me by M de Laborde, head valet-de-chambre of Lewis XV. and governor of the Louvre (who has left valuable memoirs of the court of Lewis XV.); by the abbé Dupinet, canon of Notre-Dame, who received his information from the archbishop of Paris; by cardinal Luynes; by madame d'Aiguillon; by the duke of Fronsac; and by marshal Richlieu. From the two contending parties; derived what I have communicated concerning the intrigues which distracted the dying monarch.

CHAP. XV.

Character of Lewis XV., according to the Duke of Choiseul—The real Character of that King—General Retrospect of his Reign—State of the royal Authority in France, when the Crown devolved on Lewis XVI.—His political Principles concerning the Protestants, the State-counties, and the Parliaments—His reserved Behaviour to the two Dauphins—Peculiar Characteristic of his Amours—Characters of his five titled Mistresses—Singular Anecdote respecting the King of Prussia, Madame Pompadour, and the War of Seven Years—Piety and Libertinism of this King—What he thought of Mankind, after Observations made during a Reign of Fifty-nine Years.

"LEWIS XV.," according to the duke of Choiseul, "was very bold in the commission of evil, and destitute of courage in all other respects. The evil he could effect made him conscious of existence, and excited in him a kind of effervescence that resembled anger. This wretched king, during this miserable species of existence, felt that he had a soul: but he had no soul for the production of good."

This portrait, drawn in the hour of ill-humour and resentment, during the exile of the duke of Choiseul at Chanteloup, is indubitably

a caricature. It is well known, that a natural mildness of disposition was the only good quality which the eighteenth century has been willing to acknowledge in the person of this king. His contemporaries, however, reproach him for solemn arbitrary decrees against the provincial magistracies, and the state assemblies. In remote times, France deemed the decrees of the king too severe, and but little suited to the temper of its inhabitants: but now that all Europe also contemplates with dread that uninterrupted series of bloody catastrophes which, within ten years, have so often destroyed the French government; now that ample and painful experience has taught us from what causes empires are threatened with destruction; now that sensation and sight are restored to us, and that we are enabled to form our judgment of the misfortunes of a revolution which can be compared with no other event; the honour of history requires, that we should correctly appreciate the state-policy of Lewis XV., and the portrait of that king, as drawn by the duke of Choiseul.

Under cardinal Fleury, under M. de Meaupeou, as in preceding times, Lewis XV. had recourse to the military force of the state for the arbitrary execution of his commands. But under different circumstances, during the contests between royal and aristocratical power,

he had the good sense to perceive the dangers of a metamorphosis of an association of judges who bought their places, in an aristocratical senate, to share with the sovereign the power of the state, and, at the same time, to administer justice. And it was necessary for the king to govern the state as he had found it established, and support it by his military authority; or that he should entrust the half of his sway to these judiciary corporations, dispersed through the provinces, and concentrated at Paris.

Experience of the nature of separate powers has cost France too dear, for her not to consider as a scourge, as a monster in politics, a division of the authority of the state with associations of men whose places are venal. As a man of sound judgment, the king invariably decided the question in favour of authority; and evinced a strength of mind, which the events of the French revolution alone enable us to judge of and value as we ought. We must not therefore be astonished, that the duke of Choiseul, the soul and support of the parliaments, should have asserted in print, conformably to their interests and his own, "that Lewis XV. had no soul but for the perpetration of evil, and that he was inflexible on every occasion." The fate of the public authority was seen in 1787

and 1788, when the ministry resigned it to the decrees and acts of the parliament of Paris; and the repentance of that association became manifest, in 1789, when conscious of its want of power to preserve the authority it had usurped.

We perceive, therefore, that Lewis XV., a prince who has been deemed the weakest of mankind, pursued a very regular system of resistance against the equally well-supported plan of the judiciary authorities, whose invariable effort it was to metamorphose themselves into a senate of administration. The firmness of this monarch will appear to much more advantage when it shall be seen, from the history of his successor, that the most distinguished orators of the parliament of Paris have been urged on by foreign influence, and the policy of European potentates, whose interest it so often is to limit the military power of our kings.

Lewis XV. cannot so easily be exculpated as to the arbitrary decrees he enforced against the administrative provincial assemblies and the state-counties. It cannot be forgotten that, about the middle of the age, he gave orders for the suspension of the states of Languedoc, and had recourse to several stretches of military authority against those of Bretany. The object was no longer to keep judges or other lawyers within due bounds, as during the insurrection

of the counsellors of parliament. The king displayed his military authority against the union of the royal authority to that of the clergy, the nobility, and the commons, constitutionally united in those provinces. He did more: he broke through treaties and precedents already agreed on between the crown and the governments of those counties, which, at the period of their voluntary union with France, had stipulated for the preservation of their privileges, primitive constitution, and parliaments.

Notwithstanding statutes so solemn, and so thoroughly sanctioned by time, the king, after the example of the second and third monarchs of the Bourbon race, suspended, dispersed, or, at times, closed these assemblies. On many occasions, he issued even *lettres de cachet*. Determined on being obeyed in every quarter, he courageously supported the contest of the crown with such provinces as were at variance with him; and resolved to punish them whenever they endangered the royal authority, or failed to act with unanimity, or carried on against him a political warfare. Obedience was no longer general; and he resolved to leave nothing untried or uneffected for its re-establishment in France.

I will not here assert that, during these various dissensions, the primary and chief blame

was not imputable to the court of France, in nearly every instance. I contemplate these past dissensions between the crown and the provinces, not as a moralist, but as a simple mechanic. Lewis XV. I consider as a monarch naturally void of energy, deviating from his usual disposition, announcing his authority with firmness, and repressing all opposition to the grounds of that authority, as if such resistance had been the height of rebellion. During each struggle, I behold him victorious over opposition. Again and again does this opposition declare itself, and is composed of complicated interests: and as often does the king confine it within its own bounds. Where a storm is raised against the person whose duty it is to carry the king's orders into execution, if that person be assailed by a pamphlet, a slur, or calumnious falsehood, the king, roused more than ever by such a censure on his judgment, raises his favourite to a more lucrative or more honourable employment: in a word, without daring to avow it, the king considered his authority as infallible, and exerted it accordingly, without any regard to its justice, or other moral relations. Hence, I behold nothing in the king's character, or the use he made of the royal authority, but the plain mechanism of the old social organisation, which he upheld through life.

His arbitrary measures, in opposition to the parliaments, preserved us from the ridiculous and dangerous league between the most powerful state of Europe and a corporation of judges; whilst such arbitrary decrees, against the provincial administrations, secured the uniformity and indivisibility of the government. To this incessant endeavour, to this firmness of the old government, the republic is indebted for the extent and boundaries which it found established. It owes them, evidently, to the vigilance of the monarchy; and it was because Lewis XVI.; who succeeded his grandfather, overlooked the conservative policy of that monarch, and of all his predecessors; it was in consequence of his entrusting his authority to vindictive magistrates, who had been punished by Lewis XV., that he blindly contributed to the destruction of the monarchy: and it was also, because Lewis XVI. overlooked the maxims of his ancestors in what related to the state-counties, that those of Bretany, Bearn, and Dauphiné, united against his measures from the extremity of the kingdom, and laid the foundation for his dethronement.

It was on these same grounds, that Lewis XV., when so often solicited to grant the protestants, not the repeal of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, but merely the means of ascertaining the legitimacy of marriages and births, constantly re-

fused this act of justice to a respectable number of his subjects. He was sounded, on this head, at periods when the public treasure was at the lowest ebb: on all sides it was asserted, that they would fill the treasury; hints were given him, that the protestant refugees would return to France, and impoverish, to our advantage, the countries which they had enriched to our loss under Lewis XIV. The king invariably rejected these overtures. He maintained, that the protestants cherished republican principles, and were enemies to the hierarchy and maxims of the French monarchy. In the council, or to his ministers, he never failed to utter the following sentence, when the protestant interests were in agitation: "Admitting that my great grandfather was wrong in expelling them from the kingdom, I should do myself an irreparable injury, were I to recal them."

He was passing sentence, in idea, on the Rabout-St.-Etiennes and the Lasources, before their birth, and he condemned them in favour of his established authority. Why did he not also support that authority, of such consequence to every empire, by the strength it derives from decency and dignity? With regard to the authority of the crown, as connected with the royal family, so desirous was he of preserving it one and indivisible, that he never would admit the

two dauphins to the council, or to a knowledge of public affairs. He was jealous of his son to an unheard-of degree. He refused his god-son a seat in the council. Yet, so unaccountable is the fate of sovereigns, he fancied that he reigned; and he never reigned. His tutor, cardinal Fleury, a man of great cunning, monopolised the royal power from the early youth of the king till the year 1743. The cardinal was succeeded by madame Châteauroux and madame Pompadour. The latter and the duke of Choiseul divided the sway in 1758: but on the banishment of that minister the power seems to have been greatly divided; Maupeou, d'Aiguillon, Richlieu, Terray, &c. continued to direct the destiny of the state.

We may now see what foundation there was for the sarcasms of the duke of Choiseul on the memory of the king, as they relate to "his weakness in the cause of virtue, and his energy in the commission of vice." I must add, that Lewis XV. ever lamented the necessity of punishing the magistrates, the ministers, and the bishops, when he had to suppress their hasty dissensions. He never signed a *lettre de cachet* without great reluctance. Of this he gave exemplary proofs, when, on the one hand, he sent a written order for the banishment of the archbishop of Paris, which, on the same day, he

rendered abortive by a friendly and flattering letter, by which he granted him favours that he had before refused. In the same manner, he signed an order for taking up the celebrated *chevalier d'Eon*, and, on the other hand, advised the party to guard against the execution of the order for his arrest.

With regard to the attachment of this prince to the fair sex, with which he is so bitterly reproached by the present generation, history cannot exculpate him on that head. Neither can it ascertain the number or chronology of his amours. How astonishing must the progress of vice appear in this prince, individually considered. Deeply enamoured with his queen from their first connection, he found no woman, in 1728, whom he deemed comparable with her, for merit, or for beauty. When the cardinal wished to give him, as a mistress, the countess of Mailly, in order to enslave a prince in whom he had no confidence, she was under the necessity of throwing out every lure. At this period, he was still so economical in the expenditure of public money, that when he foresook, and, most unjustly, sacrificed her to her sister, the first expences of his amours, which had been advanced by the deluded madame de Mailly, remained unpaid. I have been assured by marshal de Mailly, that at her death several

debts were unliquidated which she had contracted on account of the amorous pleasures of the king.

She was succeeded by madame de Vintimille, the sister of madame de Mailly.—"The size of this lady," said madame de Flavacourt, "was that of a grenadier, and she had the neck of a crane, and the smell of an ape:" yet there was something in her demeanour which commanded respect; and she had the talent of captivating and ruling mankind. Madame de Flavacourt, who was still living in the seventh year of the republic (1798), and triumphed over the revolutionary committees, which had spared her life on account of her wit, declared that madame de Vintimille was the only one of her three sisters who had the art of moulding the king to her wish. She was, also, the only one of them to whom the king was really attached. Madame de Flavacourt also related, that her sister, then a boarder at a convent, made the following declaration: "I will go to court, to visit my sister Mailly; the king will see me, and take me into favour; and I will rule over my sister, the king, France, and Europe."—Her sway lasted only a few months; for (according to madame de Flavacourt) the jealous cardinal Fleury gave her poison. The disconsolate monarch immediately passed from the arms of the second sister to

those of the third, who is known to us by the name of the fair madame de Châteauroux; so great was the predilection of this prince for the family of the Maillys. Happily, this last was possest of a dignified soul, and inherited the maxims and manners of her family.

Madame de Châteauroux wished Lewis XV. to appear as a king of France ought to appear, at the head of his armies; and he did so.—While in favour, she constantly urged him to support the dignity of a king of France, and that with great splendour. She respected the queen, to whom she was more than ever attentive, from the moment of her elevation. The cabals of the devotees occasioned her dismission, during the dangerous illness of the king at Metz. She died, in consequence of those cabals; and was succeeded by madame de Pompadour.

The new mistress, from contrary motives, wished the king to lead a sedentary life, and Lewis XV. went from home no more. He consented to live at Versailles, a tranquil observer of the events of an unsuccessful war. They were so humiliating and disastrous, that Frenchmen still recollect them with excessive grief. Madame de Pompadour, who was the chief cause of them, did not blush on that account. The splendour of her household, her equipages, her country-seats, her attendants, her parties, her moveables, were not

those of a mistress, but of a queen of France. The real queen, the virtuous Maria Leczinska, forgotten, wholly retired, without influence, lamenting with the dauphin and his sisters, with cardinal Luynes, the president Hanault, and father Griffet the jesuit, the scandalous life of the king, and the profusion and political degeneracy of the cabinet, was at the head of an opposition which formed itself in silence against the errors and vices of the court. Choiseul brought forward the new diplomatical system; and the dauphin patronised the opposite opinions. In process of time, an archduchess became the dauphiness of the Bourbon race, as a counterpoise to the opposition part of the royal family; and we shall see what a contest she had to maintain on the occasion.

Madame Dubarry succeeded madame Pompadour; an event which, once more, disconcerted the system of the court of Vienna. To the three favourite sisters, all hated by Maria Theresa, had succeeded the complaisant madame de Pompadour, whom the empress styled "her cousin," and with whom she negotiated the alliance of her house, in 1756.

Now, on the contrary, little Dubarry was become the support and last resource of the duke of Aiguillon, in public opposition to the party of the duke of Choiseul, and of Maria

Theresa; and this new opposition continued till, at the approach of death, Lewis XV. endeavoured to quiet the remorse of his conscience, by dismissing madame Dubarry, the object of his last regret.

The libertine Lewis XV. had, in several instances, taken a devotional turn. In this way, he had exhibited an exemplary farce at Metz. On that occasion, madame Châteauroux became a wandering fugitive, at once prosecuted by the ecclesiastical canons, so inimical to concubines, and by her lover's *lettres de cachet*. The king, having been educated by the superstitious Fleury, underwent, in health as in sickness, the singular alternatives of pious and lascivious propensities. Conscience and love were at perpetual variance within his breast. "I impose on my own conscience," said he very frequently to madame de Pompadour; who, lest he should slip through her hands, removed from his library the sermons of Massillon and Bourdaloue, in the perusal of which he took much delight. He dreaded death as children dread lightning, the decease of his friends and relations awed him into terror. I have related the symptoms of his last sickness, and the horrors of his imagination, ever religious, and tormented by the dread of punishments in the world to come. The death of his friend, the marquis of

Chauvelin, affected him very deeply, at the close of his days; as did that of the ambassador of Genoa.

Lewis XV. was neither constant nor reciprocal in his amours. He did not love madame Mailly, who adored him. He idolized madame de Vintimelle, whose attachment was founded on nothing but her ambition. He was affectionate to madame de Châteauroux, who was in love with d'Agenois, afterwards duke of Aiguillon: and though, from the first night of cohabitation, he was disgusted with madame de Pompadour, who was far less handsome than she seemed to be, he suffered her to rule him, and select young girls for his enjoyment. Madame Dubarry, who brought with her to court the manners of the state of life which she had relinquished, had the art, at last, to make a slave of this prince; who had a natural inclination for decency and refinement, and who supported his dignity, till the elevation of madame de Pompadour.

Thus, Lewis XV. loved such of his mistresses as he naturally ought not to have loved; whilst she whom he idolized was received at first with coldness, and subsequently dismissed with ignominy. I transmit to posterity a sentence which is decisive of the character of this monarch. It is as follows:

"Lewis XV. was fully informed, that his

favourite mistress, madame Dubarry, had come from a house of common prostitution, to his court and his bed."

Of this fact I have been assured by marshal Richlieu and his son, by madame Flavacourt, and marshal Mailly. All these four wished well to his memory; and they all agreed in certifying the above particular. The dauphin of France, afterwards Lewis XVI., under these circumstances, was distant, silent, exemplary in his morals, and cautiously reserved. He did not conceal from the king the disgust he felt in suffering Maria Antoinetta to enter the private apartments of Lewis XV. The discontented monarch, accusing him of disaffection, kept him remote from all state transactions.

The duke of Choiseul, who discovered and announced the origin of madame Dubarry, and had ballads written on the subject; who paid for the song of "*La Bourbonnaise*," and caused it to be sung and distributed throughout the country; fell a victim to his measures. His haughty and open conduct, and his undisguised opposition to the licentious excesses of the king, caused him to be banished, and closely watched at Chanteloup.

The two Richlieus, Aiguillon, Meaupeou, Terray, Bertin, a court filled with women, who were almost all prostitutes; base insignificant noblemen; the infamous associates of Dubarry;

Dubarry himself, who had sold his name, and signed a marriage contract which conferred a title on the young prostitute: such were the only persons in power at Versailles.

History must execrate such a scene of infamy. The laws of the state, and those of religion, had formerly combined to preserve social order, by salutary principles of morality; to keep the tender passions within the bounds of decency; to render marriage a sacred institution, adapted to the natural propensities of our nature. At the period we have been treating, the successor of St. Lewis, the most christian king, the religious and devout Lewis XV., abandoned these laws, and the first of social institutions, to the mockery of the profligate. Invited to approach the throne, disposers of the favours and honours of government, all the libertines of the kingdom were taught, by the example of the king and the court, that it was fashionable to marry for mere form's sake, and to select a prostitute from the public brothels, to be a wife, or a mistress, as might suit inclination. Thus did the last king but one of the Bourbon family commence the debasement of the crown*.

We must divide the long reign of Lewis XV.

* The directory, under the republic, has offered an insult to public decorum and the dignity of marriage, in a different way. During that administration, I have seen young couples arrive at Paris for the celebration of their marriage, before a

into two periods that which preceded, and that which followed, the crime of Damiens. The character of Lewis XV. was weak before that attempt on his life;—after that crime, it was reduced to a non-entity. The actions of the monarch were those of a man, who, depressed by his fears to a state of extreme weakness, exhibited no marks of character but by the appearance of the armies he commanded. Before his death, he was requested by two courtiers, to impart to them such general remarks as he might have made, *in his wisdom*, for the good of the state, during the course of his reign.—"What I have observed during life," answered the king, "is, that the race of mankind is a noxious race. I have not yet met with one man who united refinement with integrity." Such was one of the opinions of this king, the most mistrustful that ever lived. He began his reign in 1715. He died in 1774. He had studied mankind sixty-nine years,

kind of municipal altars, adorned by two very singular statues. One of them was a bust of the author of the Maid of Orleans, and the "Epistle to Eurania." The other, that of the unnatural father who became a stranger to his five children, by carrying them successively to the Foundling Hospital, never to be recognised amongst the numbers received there.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Influence of Women on Revolutions and the general Affairs of Europe, during the Reign of Lewis XV., and of the particular Influence of the Five titled Mistresses of Lewis XV. on the internal and external Policy of the Kingdom —Animosity of the reigning Favourite against her Predecessor—Influence of such Alternatives on the Policy of the State—Of the Mistresses in the Interest of the King of Prussia: and of those in the Interest of the Court of Vienna —Speculations, on this Head, of the King of Prussia, relative to Maria Antoinetta—Mental and diplomatic Reserve of Frederic II. concerning the Family of Aiguillon—His Predictions and public Declaration concerning a future Mistress for Lewis XVI.—He gives her Portrait, and describes her Character.

MADAME DE MAINTENON, privately married to Lewis XIV., by exerting her influence in a very indirect manner, relative to the persecution of the protestants and jansenists, and by raising the legitimated children of the king to the rank of legitimate princes, capable of succeeding to the crown, degraded and perplexed the close of the illustrious reign of that monarch.

At her death, another woman, equally imperious and artful, seemed to succeed her. I mean the queen of Spain, second wife of Philip V., who, with the view of obtaining crowns for

her children, armed France and Spain against Austria, from which she wrested the kingdoms of Naples and of the two Sicilies.

She was surpassed by the empress Maria Theresa, who, rising superior to her sex in the war of 1740, victorious over the league of France and Europe armed to strip her of her dominions, but baffled in the war of seven years, when she was in alliance with France in the hope of ruining the king of Prussia, closed her career by acting the subordinate and contemptible part of a potent sovereign, usurping the provinces of Poland, of which she deprived Stanislaus.

Catharine II. shares in the projects and fame of Maria Theresa; but Catharine pursued with success her plans in the south, to the detriment of the provinces of the Ottoman Porte, after having effected a great revolution in the heart of the court.

At last, Maria Antoinetta closes the age of convulsions brought about by women. These memoirs will shew her to have invariably acted the part of an archduchess at the court of France, constantly provoking the ill-will of the king's aunts, of her sisters-in-law, of the household of the first prince of the blood, of the grandees of the court, of the notables, of the parliaments, of the constituent assemblies, of

the *girondins* and the *montagnards*. All the sections of the revolution invariably declared against the queen.

Thus was the eighteenth century perpetually embroiled by women on the throne. Their views and interests were so many revolutions. Can that which is contrary to law, or the order of things at the head of a state, be any thing but a splendid achievement, or a revolution? The ambition of being queen of France, in madame de Maintenon; the desire of crowning her children, in the queen of Spain; the rancour of Maria Theresa against France and Frederic; the desire of reigning in Catharine; and that of governing France in Maria Antoinetta; were the causes of the revolutions and disturbances of Europe in the eighteenth century.

The interior of France itself was equally thrown into confusion by the influence, the passions, and the private views, of the five acknowledged mistresses of Lewis XV. They rose above the queen, in influence and authority, and, I may add, even in pomp and splendour, within the court of Lewis XV. The three first acknowledged mistresses, madame de Mailly, madame de Vintimille, and madame de Châteauroux, these three celebrated sisters, all originally Maillys, attracted the attention of the powers of Europe, from the moment it was per-

ceived that the king began to be governed by their influence. From that moment, they were lavishly flattered by foreign powers. They gave audience to ambassadors. Distinguished by their high birth, by their ambitious sentiments, by the refinement of their manners and measures, they respected the political opinions which families of their rank still entertained relative to the house of Austria. During their sway, politics were not debased. From Frederic, they regularly received the attentions of a polite and gallant prince. While they were in favour, France twice carried on war against the court of Vienna; and, during the influence of madame de Châteauroux, France and Prussia were united against Maria Theresa. The husbands of the three favourites had been, or were still, attached to the army: and madame de Châteauroux, eager to gratify the wishes of Frederic, prevailed on her lover, Lewis XV., to join the war at the head of his troops, artfully making him sensible of the glorious example and activity of Frederic on such an occasion.

Frederic soon perceived that madame de Pompadour had very different views. Kept at a distance from court as long as madame Châteauroux was in favour; long threatened with signal punishment whenever she ventured to follow the king, and throw out lures for him whilst he was hunting in the forest of Sennar;

full of resentment against her predecessor, she acted in direct opposition to whatever had been done or attempted by madame de Châteauroux. The court of Austria was, on this occasion, more active and more skilful than Frederic. Kaunitz quickly concluded negotiations which overturned the old system of diplomacy, and alienated from us the best of our friends, Frederick II.*

Madame de Pompadour, proud of the alliance which had been negotiated in France under her guidance, of the overthrow of our ancient cabinet, which was effected by her, and of the rise of the advocates for the new system of diplomacy, engraved herself on copper a very curious allegory relative to this alliance.

As to the hatred of the king of Prussia against madame Pompadour, he abundantly made it manifest by the fugitive pieces published by him at the time. He gave a farther proof of it, by ordering one of his agents to

* I am informed by a person very well versed in the political affairs of those times, that the king of Prussia had, in his cabinet, portraits of the three sisters who were mistresses of Lewis XV., as well as that of madame de Pompadour. "*Petticoat the Fourth*," said he one day to our ambassador, "is, at this moment, an enemy to a good understanding between France and Prussia." This sarcasm was reported to madame de Pompadour, and not forgotten by her. It accelerated the war of seven years against the king of Prussia. If this anecdote be true, as I am convinced it is from the known intelligence and probity of the person who related it to me, one may form from it a correct idea of this monarch's character, as of that of Pompadour.

purchase the most valuable of her moveables. The massive golden chandeliers, the looking-glasses, those masterpieces of our artists which adorn the palaces of the Prussian monarch, were all the property of that celebrated woman. A sarcasm, or an appropriate witticism, from Frederic, on the arrival of each finished piece of these effects at Potsdam, evinced the satisfaction of this monarch at seeing himself rid of a woman who had the disposal of the treasures and armies of France, and who had endangered his very existence.

With regard to the hatred of madame de Pompadour against madame de Châteauroux, it had been proved, from the moment of her own arrival at court, by a circumstance which deserves to be related. Dagé was, at this period, the favourite hair-dresser of the princesses of the blood, and of the most distinguished ladies at court, madame de Châteauroux having brought him into vogue. He was patronised by the women, because he had brought his art to the highest pitch of neatness and perfection. He adapted his mode of dressing to the features of his fair votaries; and was supposed to possess the art of adding to the charms of beauty, particularly in women of an elegant shape, and of giving them a younger appearance. The princesses of the blood, and ladies of high rank,

had ceased to have their hair dressed by their own servants, and made it a point to employ this twister of locks; so that the coxcomb became the spoiled child of the ladies at court. Dagé's countenance was handsome, his limbs were well proportioned, he was naturally facetious, and he was besides a boaster. Relying on the protection of the dauphiness, the sister-in-law of Lewis XV., he gave himself airs with the opposite party, so as to make many objections when desired to dress madame de Pompadour, then just arrived under the name of madame Normand d'Etioles. He alleged the number of his established customers, and pretended to have more than he could attend to. Madame de Pompadour, though much disconcerted by the part she had to act, was determined not to stoop beneath the reigning fashion. She sent for Dagé, and was obliged to tamper with him. Having removed the hairdresser's objections, "How have you contrived," said she to him, the first time he waited on her, "to get into such vogue, and to acquire the reputation which you possess?"—"Can you be surprised at that, madame?" replied the facetious Dagé, "*I dressed* THE OTHER." The toilet of madame de Pompadour was, on that day, numerously and brilliantly attended. Nothing could exceed the vexatious confusion of all who were present. That "Dagé *dressed* THE

OTHER," was a witticism in the mouths of the dauphiness and princesses of France; a witticism which, in a great measure, gave rise to those quarrels that soon after broke out, between the royal family and the favourite mistress. The princes and princesses gave the appellation of "MADAME THIS," to madame d'Etioles; and that of "MADAME THE OTHER," to madame Châteauroux; to the great vexation of Lewis XV.

Madame Dubarry, who succeeded madame de Pompadour as acknowledged mistress, was entirely in the interest of M. d'Aiguillon, the minister for foreign affairs. Her political opinions were, of course, different from those of her predecessors. She was given to understand, that madame de Pompadour was the enemy of the king of Prussia, and the friend of the court of Vienna; and that a change in politics was necessary for the support of her own power. Being wholly ignorant and destitute of connected ideas, she suffered herself to be entirely guided by M. d'Aiguillon; and rivalled the dauphiness in beauty and splendour, who, at the death of Lewis XV., caused her to be shut up in a religious community.

From these clashing interests of the court, we may well conclude, that the king was a mere cypher. Rather than be discomposed by

any change in the course of his pleasures, this prince altered and perplexed the whole system of European politics; a system under which, in consequence of the great influence of France, his power was pre-eminent. Because his acknowledged mistresses presumed to interfere in diplomacy, we were, at his death, without a single ally. Prussia, Russia, and Austria, deprived us of Poland, which was friendly to us. Sweden and Denmark looked on in silence. England was a mere spectator of the scene: and the king, though king of France, being despised throughout Europe, suffered himself to be deemed despicable without resentment. The appellation of *Lewis the gentle* was given him some time before his death, and has been continued.

Frederic II. thoroughly understood the organisation, the interests, the views, and insignificance, of the court of France, whilst it was enslaved under Maria Antoinetta, and had no weight in Europe. Hence the witticism of this prince, who could not forbear disclosing, in his military style, a very singular and circumstantial secret, which, in time, reached the ears of Maria Antoinetta. Some months before his death, this monarch declared, at Potsdam, with that tone of sarcasm and ridicule which he sometimes affected when speaking of women: "At forty,

my brother Lewis, after the example of his predecessors, will no longer sleep with his wife, as she will then be fretful and old. He will have a mistress; but, depend upon it, this Pompadour will not be an Austrian: from interest and inclination, she will be warlike, and a Prussian. On this occasion, it will be my successor's turn to become the most useful ally of the mistress of the most christian king."

Yes, doubtless, as at that distance was foreseen by the sagacious Frederic, the termination of the queen's power was inevitable in France; where, owing to the quickness of our feelings, time antiquates, wears away, and annihilates systems, administrations, families, and men: but fate had decreed, that a republic should occupy the place of the mistress, prophesied by the genius of Frederic; it decreed, that the successor of Frederic should be baffled by that republic; and that, after many errors and wars, he should be the first of the European kings to acknowledge that formidable French republic, and be on terms of amity with it.

I am at a loss, therefore, to conceive how Frederic could hazard the following assertion in his Memoirs:—"Lewis XVI. made it his rule, in every thing, to follow the will of his father; and it was in consequence of that will, that M. Maurepas, disgraced by Lewis XV.,

became first minister to Lewis XVI.; that M. Aiguillon was banished; and that M. Choiseul for ever lost the hope of being restored to favour." M. Aiguillon was the friend of the late dauphin; he was an advocate for all diplomatic maxims which were contrary to those of the duke of Choiseul; he was of course in favour with the king of Prussia; and, as such, was sacrificed by Maria Antoinetta. One cannot, therefore, account for this voluntary misrepresentation of Frederic concerning the duke of Choiseul: for Frederic had a thorough knowledge of that singular mechanical arrangement of Prussian and an Austrian party, which had been established in France from the first existence of the Prussian monarchy. Was it the aim of king Frederic to bewilder his readers on this subject, with the view of keeping the family of Aiguillon attached to his interests, and to screen it from the hatred of the opposite party? The duke of Aiguillon, a member of the constituent assembly, and the son of the one in question, made several violent motions both against Maria Antoinetta and the Austrian alliance: in his public speeches, as in private conversation, all his opinions leaned towards Prussia.

It is beyond a doubt that, if France had not been at this time in a state of revolution, he

would never have made known his sentiments, his maxims, and his very extensive knowledge on this subject, which Frederic might be acquainted with in reserve for a period more favourable to his family. This, assuredly, was the drift of the profound and artful Frederic in publishing his seeming ignorance of the system and family of the duke of Aiguillon.

Thus it appears, that foreign potentates, Frederic as well as Maria Theresa, have, at all times, had in France confidential families attached to their interests. The republic may derive advantage from this information. It will be seen besides, in the course of these Memoirs, what alliances were naturally to be expected between such and such potentates, and such and such of our political factions, when we exhibit the diplomatic mechanism of the French revolution.—Let us return to the state of France at the king's death.

CHAP. XVII.

The Situation in which Lewis XV., at his Death, left the Royal Family, the Ministry, the Finances, the Receipt and Expenditure, the Magistracy, the Naval Department, the Army, and those who commanded it.

LEWIS XV. at his death, bequeathed to the French monarchy a number of legacies, which, after the lapse of eighteen years, were doomed to overturn and destroy it to its very foundation.

When the daughter of Maria Theresa became queen of France, she sowed the seeds of dissension in the Bourbon family. Fatal animosities were soon to take place between her and the children of Lewis XV., his two sisters-in-law, and the grandees who were employed about her person.

The count d'Artois already led so licentious a life, as to draw on himself, before his misfortunes, the contempt of every Frenchman who had still any regard for decency and public decorum.

With regard to the administration of affairs, the king had left it in the hands of the most

profligate men. The duke of Vrillière was one of its oldest contemptible members. Bertin still remained in power, whose office it had been to superintend the haram, called the *parc aux cerfs*, and the filthy debaucheries of the king. A national and irrecoverable bankruptcy had rendered the abbé Terray an object of general execration: whilst the arbitrary measures of the duke of Aiguillon and of Maupeou, had excited all those against the royal authority, who were weary of the absolute and military power of the French kings; and even all the advocates for despotic sway; because the king had exceeded all bounds, by degrading the kingdom in the eyes of his subjects, and still more in those of foreign powers. The nation was unanimous in its wish for a change in administration.

The taxes were raised to such a pitch, that several of the provinces were unable to pay their assistants. Many peasants of the Limosin, of the Sevennes, the Pyrenées, and of Dauphiny, provinces naturally barren and presenting many obstacles to cultivation, relinquished the lands of their forefathers, finding their crops inadequate to the amount of ruinous taxation.

With regard to the expenditure, such was the profusion of the court, that, without a radical and extensive reform of this branch of finance, a reform of which the court was incapable, the king

dom was in danger of a general bankruptcy, and of a revolution.

The magistracy, distinguished by the appellation of *Maupeou's parliament*, had no stability. It was assailed on all sides by the Choiseul faction, ever bold and artful in its modes of attack and defence. The jansenists lamented their dissolved and exiled parliaments; nor were their tears or their intrigues without effect; whilst the jesuits and their partisans deplored, in their turn, their last dissolution. In this manner, all was complaint and lamentation in two opposite parties.

The nation had, before this, been disturbed by two powerful rival factions, which had made war against each other. Now, they conjointly made war on the state; a dangerous circumstance, the forerunner of the dissolution of social order, which takes place when governments, in a state of distress, or of blindness, are in want of one of the parties, to take its share of hatred and resistance, of attachment and defence. The unjust and glaring persecution sustained by the magistracy, rendered it respectable, and attracted the pity of many.

Every thing bore the appearance of relaxed authority in all the other departments of state. The navy, which had been nearly annihilated in the last war with the English, was not rebuilt,

Great Britain had disgraced France by a treaty worthy of the times of Charles VI.

The army was no better attended to than the navy: mere courtiers were at the head of it, in whose conduct impartial judges could discover nothing but proofs of general ignorance, of want of skill in military operations, and shameful defeats in the war of seven years. Among five hundred officers of superior rank, all old enough to command, France could not reckon twelve capable of supporting the long-established reputation of our troops, and worthy of being named as military characters.

CHAP. XVIII.

State of the Clergy and of religious Opinions, at the Death of Lewis XV.—Foreign Potentates, jealous of the French Monarchy, encourage and set in Motion the Party of Philosophers against the original Constitution of the Government—State of polite Literature, Arts, and Sciences—State of Morals, and of the national Character.

THE dignified clergy, at the death of Lewis XV., had lulled asleep their ridiculous disputes, and the reciprocal animosities of the followers of Jansenius and of Molina. The clerical molinists no longer imprisoned or banished the clerical jansenists; nor did they manifest cruelty or harshness against the protestants. This class of the dignitaries of the church, possessed of a fifth of the whole produce of France, quietly went on from youth to age, without any concern for the welfare of religion or of the state; with a marked dislike for ecclesiastical functions; in the enjoyment of fashionable pleasures; and, not unfrequently, in habits of excessive debauchery. Two hundred chapters of canons deemed themselves of much consequence in France, because they

sung psalms; but the benedictine order of monks was of service in the education of youth, and in making curious researches into our history. The fathers of the oratory, the victorins, and above all, the genevesans, were distinguished by their eminence in science and polite literature; the other religious orders had sunk into a state of perfect indifference about merit and celebrity. The clergy forebore to maintain noisy disputes from the time the jesuits ceased to provoke them. The jansenists no longer displayed their talents; and their rigid maxims were neither quoted, nor deemed worthy of notice, as heretofore. Fanaticism ceased to be prevalent among the clergy; Christopher de Beaumont, formerly ardent and implacable, was growing old and more quiet. Through life he had assiduously employed such means as he thought would procure him a cardinal's hat; and, through life, he had erred in the choice of those means, not reflecting, that he lived in an age of tampering negotiations, not of zealous superstition. The rising philosophy of the times, by exhibiting the quarrels and sects of the clergy as ridiculous or absurd, had softened their manners. The clergy became timid and less intriguing. This philosophy had even made a progress of a different kind: it had gently insinuated itself among the clergy, and secured its establishment

with them. The nation considered Dillon, Boisgelin, Lomenie, Cicé, and some others, as amiable and philosophic prelates, because they entertained sentiments of toleration, or had connections with the innovators of the age. This reputation had obliged the court to confer on them such prelacies as gave the right of superintending the administration of the state-counties; which gave rise, in France, to the distinction between "philosophical bishops, who had the administration of provinces," and "theological bishops, who had the administration of the sacraments."

As to the party of the philosophers, it is very necessary, under these circumstances, to pay attention to the morals, the doctrines, the intrigues, and the ambition of that party. The active policy of our cabinet, in exciting troubles in Russia, America, and England; in humbling the Russian party of the *caps*, in Sweden; and in renewing the royal and French party of the *hats*; had produced secret animosities against France, in several European cabinets. Catharine the Second hated us; and Frederic II. did not forget our having armed all Europe against his monarchy. Catharine, unwilling or unable to attack us by main force, perceiving that the most daring of our factions were entirely submissive to the court, gave great

encouragement to persons of such revolutionary principles as were calculated to overturn the established form of government. The court of France had brought the protestants to submission; a calvinistical rebellion was become an impossibility, considering the new system of moral sense now prevalent among Frenchmen; the parliaments and jansenists could, at most, make attacks only on certain parts of the social organisation; but, when the authors of the Encyclopedia had explained and diffused the new system, which destroyed the mechanism of the French monarchy, when their aim was to break the springs of the ancient government, Catharine and Frederic placed themselves at the head of the revolutionary and destructive party, of which the plan was vast and connected: and the two first sovereigns of Europe were seen to descend, as it were, from the throne, and place themseves on a level with the leading French philosophers, that they might be heard by them. Catharine and Frederic invited them to their courts, and attached them to their persons by presents and pensions, and by the intercourse of periodical and friendly letters. The rancour of Voltaire, d'Argens, Diderot, Condorcet, d'Alembert, &c. against J. C., against the popes, the dignified clergy, the Sorbonne college, the parliaments, and, at length, against the political organisation of the French

monarchy, was encouraged and supported for twenty years by Frederic and Catharine II. Did the court and the parliaments prosecute the writings of Voltaire? Did the king order Diderot into confinement at the castle of Vincennes? A letter from Catharine, the flattering applause of Frederic, the chamberlain's key, a pension, or the title of preceptor to some prince, made the philosopher amends, and urged him to renew his attacks. The alliance between the northern crowned heads and French philosophy carried the encyclopedists to such a height of intoxication, that they no longer considered themselves as having relatives, or a country of their own. Mankind became their family, and the terrestrial globe their native country. Catharine, before her death, was shocked, and blushed at the patronage she had afforded to French philosophy, when, in 1789, she had seen its first effects. She was afraid she might be classed among the causes of the revolution. These, no doubt, seem bold assertions: but let us for a moment attend to the words of Frederic, and judge of him from himself.

"The philosophers *," wrote Frederic to d'Alembert, on the 23d of July, 1772—"the philosophers, those men of divine souls, sprung

* See the Posthumous Works of Frederic II. King of Prussia: original edition of Berlin and Strasburg, vol. ix. p. 151.

from universal reason, by teaching mankind how to think, have at length cleared their minds of fictitious tales, as absurd as those of the Ass's Skin and Blue Beard, so long held up as sacred by knaves in a cassock. It is on this account, I love these philosophers, and for the same reason ought all men of sense to erect altars to them."

Frederic was evidently making a dupe of the French philosopher; for he wrote, at the same time, to others in the following remarkable terms:

"If it were my wish to destroy my government and provinces, I should effectually complete my purpose by leaving them to the direction of a set of philosophers." He was aware, therefore, of the destructive influence of the philosophers; and he encouraged the new philosophy in the heart of France, that it might oppose the established government: and when we recollect the dangers he underwent when Austria and France united with a view of reducing him to his original marquisate of Brandenbourg, we find that Frederic employed every mean to thwart a formidable nation, which was leagued with Austria to destroy him by the war of seven years, under the late king; and to thwart it also under Lewis XVI., whose marriage with an archduchess maintained the same system, and the same errors. Frederic was never sincere

with the French philosophers who corresponded with him. At so early a period as 1740, he wrote as follows to M. de Voltaire: "I have been present, my dear friend, at the death of a king.... This lesson was not necessary to convince me of the vanity of human greatness.... Consider me in no other light but that of a zealous citizen; a philosopher rather inclining to scepticism.... Never write to me but in a manly style; and, in your correspondence with me, avoid all titles, great names, and allusions to exterior pomp, as beneath you."—The aim of Frederic in this letter was to endeavour to dethrone, for his own advantage, the young Maria Theresa; he was writing against the vanity of human greatness with the view of founding in Europe a new species of monarchy. On another occasion he thus expressed himself to Voltaire: "It is rumoured, that your poem, on the law of nature, the philosophy of good sense, and the genius of Helvetius, has been condemned to the flames at Paris.... I consider it as redounding in some degree to my fame, that France should have chosen the same epoch for carrying on war against me, and against good sense, at Paris."... M. de Voltaire observes to him, in his letter, dated in June 1759: "Your majesty reproaches me with sometimes paying court to the *Religion of Infamy*. Good God! on the contrary, my

whole endeavour is to extirpate it; and in this I make great progress among persons of candour and good-breeding." During a space of fifteen years, the king of Prussia, Catharine II., Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Condorcet, invariably distinguished the Roman-catholic religion by the appellation of "the religion of infamy." Voltaire and d'Alembert ended all their letters by the following abbreviations, ECR. L'INF., which, for a long time, alarmed and puzzled the police-officers by whom their letters were opened.

On the 8th of February, 1766, Frederic thus writes to Voltaire: "The *religion of infamy* produces none but poisonous plants: for you has been reserved the exploit of crushing it with your formidable club; of destroying it by your numerous shafts of ridicule, which inflict deeper wounds than any kind of arguments." On the 25th of February, 1766, he wrote to him as follows: "Your old age resembles the childhood of Hercules: this demi-god crushed serpents, while in his cradle; and you, though weighed down by years, still crush the *religion of infamy*."

In 1767, the progress of the new philosophy was very conspicuous: Frederic and Voltaire congratulated each other on the occasion; "I

have read all the productions you sent me," said Frederic to the philosopher; "..... your arguments against the *religion of infamy* are so strong, that, since the days of Celsus, nothing has appeared in print of so striking a nature..... No refuge remains for the phantom of error; which has been beaten in front, and on every side..... It is time to pronounce its funeral oration, and to commit it to the grave."

In a word, Frederic discloses his sentiments more openly than ever, in his letter of the 16th of March, 1771: "I very much approve of the plan," says he to Voltaire, "of rendering the *religion of infamy* completely ridiculous by complimentary demonstrations of overstrained civility."

This *religion of infamy* was that of the Gallican church, of which the dignitaries composed the first order of a state, still formidable to all the potentates of Europe: an order which formed one of the three foundations of a government, which the philosophy of Frederic, of Catharine II. of Voltaire, and Diderot, was endeavouring to overturn. Frederic and Catharine, who were founding military monarchies, and did not entrust them to the guidance of philosophers, set up the destructive influence of the philosophers in opposition to France, the continual object of their jealous apprehensions. Catharine was

unable to destroy the French monarchy by force of arms; but she attacked its constitutional foundations by encouraging subversive maxims, which overturned it in 1789.

This struggle of the northern sovereigns against the religion of the south, could not but weaken the attachment of all orders to the cause of religion. Towards the end of the reign of Lewis XV., opinions favourable to religion were nearly confined to the king, and a weak party at court. The attendance on public worship was left to tradesmen and the lower classes of the people. Those persons of fashion who did not turn religion into ridicule, confined themselves to three ways of showing their adherence to it, and that only from a remainder of respect which diminished daily. On Sundays, they went from home, and paid their visits, to avoid an attendance on the celebration of mass: hence they were thought to have been present at that ceremony. The time restricted for the Easter communion they, every year, divided into two portions, the former of which they passed at Paris, and the latter in the country. By this means they bewildered those who were on the watch, from the curiosity of discovering whether the Easter communion was received by them, or not. Finally, in cases of death-bed

sickness, the husband or wife, who was to be the survivor, kept the confessor at a distance. There were objections to the vicar's being let into the secrets of the dying party, who, most commonly, had been faithless to the marriage vows; in an age during which a strict adherence to moral duties was considered in no other light than as a matter of jest. The children, the relations, the husband, or the wife, concealed the danger of the sick party from the priest, or sent for a confessor when it was too late.

Except in the above predicaments, I hardly ever saw persons in high life, before the revolution, give proofs of any attachment to the cause of religion: unless, perhaps, a few old men, or, more commonly, aged female devotees, living retired from court, and in the habits of frequenting the church of St. Sulpice, that being the parish church resorted to by persons of distinction.

The revolution, which has overturned and metamorphosed every thing, now exhibits the remnants of the ancient nobility, in their suffering state, recurring to those religious duties which they had relinquished under the old government. The same revolution shows us the middle orders, which alone formerly set the steady example of regular living, and of

respect for divine worship, in a state of indifference and incredulity: so that those in France who were unbelievers, have been brought back, by misfortune, to a sense of religious consolations.

Within a short space of time, we have all witnessed these alternatives, and changes in our manners; let us fix them in the remembrance of our descendants, nor despair of seeing public morality brought to perfection. Should the consular government be uniform in setting an example of it, France, which was impressed with the decorous and dignified manners of Lewis XIV.; which degenerated under the regency of the duke of Orleans; which was, in some degree, reclaimed during the long administration of cardinal Fleury; which became immoral under the sway of madame de Pompadour, and madame Dubarry; which was reformed at the beginning of the reign of Lewis XVI.; and, at last, let loose to every crime, to pillage, to excesses, to all the vices of those hordes of banditti who have recently been seen to usurp the government;—France will resume its ancient habits of humanity, honour, politeness, and loyalty. A plan for accomplishing all this appears to be formed by those now in power; who have commenced its execution by

giving, at this early stage, public applause to *liberal ideas*: a well-chosen, and in France a new expression, which gives us reason to expect great things, and which forms one step at least towards the restoration of the state.

CHAP. XIX.

Motives and Character of the last Assemblies of the French Clergy, immediately before the Death of Lewis XV.—They advance Accusations to the King against the Protestants and Philosophers—They announce an imminent Revolution in the Manners and Government of the Nation—They cite, as an Example, the English Revolution—They warn Lewis XV. of the Danger of a similar Revolution—Alarms of that Prince—Scene of Anarchy exhibited to the King by the French Bishops, as the Result of the Efforts of the philosophical Party.

THE events we witness, and of which we publish the history, had been clearly foreseen by men in power, and by those orders of the state whose duty it had been, for ages, by their example, by their wisdom and manners, to preserve the usages of the French monarchy. The clergy, who were not destitute of sagacity, or foresight, in what related to their interests, but very much so of proper conduct and morals, had denounced to Lewis XV. the principles of the philosophy then in vogue. The aim of that philosophy he clearly saw; but he was not equally sensible that its energies had been ex-

cited by the actual depravity of his habits. At the period when the protestants were suppressed, he had never perceived, or would never own, that the looseness of his morals and his love of riches had in like manner given rise to the protestant religion.

The clergy of France, whom Lewis XIV. had encouraged in productions worthy of the first order of the state, no longer produced writers endowed with the talents of a Bossuet, or a Fenelon; of a Massillon, an Arnaud, or a Huet. Instead of expounding to the people, with the embellishments of argument or of eloquence, the sublime truths of evangelical morality, they devoted their time to the insignificant disputes between Jansenius and Molina. Instead of rendering religion attractive and respectable, they had introduced into the state polemical wranglings. The truth of religion was become problematical in France, and the object of violent disputations. The manners of the clergy were less guarded than formerly. Decorum had, in general, found an only refuge among the parochial vicars. The bishops held their residence in the capital, where they lived in a style of great licentiousness. Thus the clergy saw clearly into the object of the exertions and writings of the philosophers; but they did not perceive that, in what related to

reformation, it was the duty of the first order of the state, to set an example of it to the people: nor does it appear that this point ever entered into their contemplations.

So strong, indeed, was even the antipathy of the higher clergy against all reforms, that it caused them, in their remonstrances, to act with injustice towards the protestants. The latter in the christian republic, are what the jansenists are in the Roman-catholicism. Their sombre manners, their rigid maxims, their troublesome precision in social intercourse, made them the natural enemies of the French clergy, who professed a great relaxation of morals. The established clergy could not bear to see, in the midst of their dioceses, men whose lives were a living and perpetual condemnation of their looser manners. The comparison was odious. Hence, as we shall see, the clergy, in their remonstrances, express their uneasiness at the preaching, the baptisms, and marriages, of the protestants. Did they wish that the protestants should be incessantly compelled by military force to submit to a foreign worship, in order to have the sanction of marriage, or else be obliged to live in a state of concubinage?

The remonstrances, animadversions, and prophecies, of the French clergy, are become essential documents of history; but require to be

weighed and examined with great caution: and here it is proper to observe, that the clergy ought to have been the first in setting a good example, and not to have made their complaints to the king through the medium of a prelate, who did not believe even in the existence of a God; namely, M. Loménie, archbishop of Toulouse.

"We shall not insist," said the bishops to Lewis XV., in the assembly of 1765, "on the urgent interest your majesty must have in stopping the progress of the new philosophy, of which the works we have just condemned are the wretched fruit; and which, going still greater lengths than the philosophy which the gospel had destroyed, rises from its ashes, not to re-establish the worship and sacrifice, nor even to confine itself to the delusive erudition, of idolatrous Rome and Athens, but to subvert and vilify whatever is held sacred by mankind. Your majesty is too well apprised of the advantages which religion confers on nations, and, above all, of the powerful support it yields to the authority of kings, not to consider impiety, which endeavours to annihilate that support, as the greatest scourge that can afflict your reign.

"This mischief of which we complain, will not cease to desolate your kingdom, till the press shall be restrained by wholesome regula-

tions faithfully executed. Thus thought and acted your illustrious predecessors, when lutheranism, after having caused the desolation of Germany, endeavoured to gain a footing in France. The piety of those great kings, and of the magistrates entrusted with their authority, caused vigorous measures to be adopted for the suppression of pernicious writings. These measures are to be found in the edicts of 1542, 1547, and 1551.

"We entreat you, sire, to have those edicts and regulations laid before you. Your majesty will there find examples of wisdom and severity worthy of imitation: you will find the authors of such books, the persons who sell, and those who buy them, condemned in heavy penalties; and even warning given of the danger of concealing and obstinately retaining them.

"We are very far from wishing, sire, to put obstacles in the way of genius, or to stop the progress of human knowledge; but it is our duty to represent to your majesty, that the contagion which threatens your kingdom, is similar to that of lutheranism, against which so many measures were adopted by your predecessors. *We are on the eve of the fatal moment when* THE PRESS WILL OVERTURN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE. Of all orders of

the state; the clergy are the first, and that to which it is most essential to preserve the morals, the religion, and *even the fundamental* LAWS, of the monarchy. It would be just and wise to place the press under our inspection; and to confer on us the direction of a business, in which it is so much our interest to prevent abuses. We do not plead for a new law: all we ask from your majesty is to have the old ones enforced. Their operation becomes the more necessary from the dangers with which we are threatened.

"Your clergy, sire, are apprised, that your majesty has given repeated orders for the suppression of this licence, which disperses among your subjects so many bad books: . . . Yet, if all who are entrusted with the execution of your orders wink at evasions; or, by tacit permissions, appear to establish a combination between impiety and the government; . . . religion, notwithstanding the pure intentions of your majesty, must lose ground amongst us, and France be, sooner or later, lost in the darkness of error."

In these remonstrances to the king, the French clergy proposed the exertion of rigorous zeal against the protestants, equal to that which they professed against unbelievers.

"It is in vain," said they, "that the exercise of every religion but the Roman-catholic is pro-

hibited in your kingdom. In defiance of the laws, the protestants flock together in every quarter. They hold assemblies in the dioceses of Valence, Viviette, Die, Grenoble, Castres, Cahors, Nîmes, Rodez, Montauban, Montpellier, Luçon, Agen, Beziers, &c. In these assemblies, their ministers preach up heresy, and administer the lord's supper; and we have to behold with grief, altar raised against altar, and the pulpit of contagion adjoining to that of truth. . . . If the law which revoked the edicts of Nantz, if your majesty's declaration, given in 1724, had been strictly observed, we dare assert, that no calvinists would now be found in France. We should be faithless to the duties of our station, were we not to represent to your majesty these illegal practices, as forming one of the chief causes that tend to extinguish the light of faith, to give strength to incredulity, and to retard the success of our endeavours for the conversion of *the impious, and the protestants*. We will not dwell, sire, on the fatal consequences which, in France, would inevitably result from a toleration that would be cruel from its effects Your majesty knows the national character of the people you govern.... and we who are the chiefs of the holy tribe, the guides, the pastors of this catholic people.... can we remain silent?... Your protection, sire,

is due, not only to religion and to the church; it is also due to yourself. If you do not exert your power in putting a stop to the encroachments of heresy, and the progress of impiety, it will be too late to apply a remedy.... What have we not to fear from our enemies? Already do they threaten us.... Restore, sire, restore to the laws all their energy, and to religion its splendour: and may the renewal of your declaration, made in 1724, be the result of our humble remonstrances."

The king appeared to be alarmed by the sentiments and prophesies of the French clergy. "I have given orders," said he, in his answer, "for the greatest vigilance in what relates to the sale of books. I partake of the apprehensions of the clergy concerning the liberty of thinking and writing, which has for some time been licentious: I will support the zeal of the bishops: their observations concerning the protestants I consider as of the utmost consequence to the tranquillity of my kingdom."

Remonstrances, couched in stronger terms, and prophecies, more explicit and detailed, were drawn up in the general assembly of the clergy, in 1770. Isaiah and Jeremiah are prophets of small note, compared with the French bishops assembled at Paris at the above period. They cited their former remonstrances, their

want of effect, and the increase of incredulity, atheism, and systems destructive to monarchy. They complained that infidelity spread from the capital to the provinces, and reached even to the humble roof of the peasant and artificer, to the destruction of their innocence and simplicity. "Impiety," said the clergy, "is the enemy of God, and of mankind. It will not be satisfied till it has annihilated all power human and divine.

"Should your majesty doubt this melancholy truth, we are able to exhibit proofs of it in an irreligious book lately dispersed among your subjects, under the specious title of THE SYSTEM OF NATURE. In it, atheism is inculcated without disguise. The author of this work, the most wicked which the human mind has hitherto dared to produce, does not think he has done mischief enough to mankind by teaching them, that there exists neither freedom of will, nor providence, nor a spiritual being, nor a future life:—he extends his observations to states, and those who govern them; in these states he finds nothing better than an assemblage of ignorant and corrupted men, prostrate before priests who deceive, and kings who oppress them. In the happy union between the priesthood and sovereignty, he discovers nothing but a league against virtue and man-

kind. He informs nations, that kings neither have, nor can have, any authority but that with which they have chosen to intrust them: that, as nations, they have a right to regulate, modify, and restrain such authority; to make sovereigns responsible for their conduct respecting it; and even to deprive them of it, whenever they shall judge such deprivation suitable to their own interests. He advises them courageously to enforce this right; and he declares to them, that they will never enjoy real happiness till they shall have set bounds to the power of their kings, and compelled them to be the representatives of the people, endowed merely with the executive power of their will.

"Anarchy and independence, sire, are the two gulphs into which the impious wish to plunge the nation. To accomplish this fatal project, they gradually break all the bonds of social duties. The secret of their atrocious designs has been recently discovered: in an unguarded moment, they have disclosed it. They are convicted of being enemies to public tranquillity, to kings, and to the deity. This book, sire, incredible as the fact may seem, is publicly sold in your capital; and, not improbably, at the very gates of your palace. It will reach the extremities of your kingdom, and spread on all sides the seeds of disobedience;

yet, those in authority remain inactive, nor think of snatching from the hands of your subjects this mass of blasphemy, and of principles destructive of that authority.

"Religion, sire, has nothing to fear from elucidation: it dreads the errors only of the human mind, and not its attacks: it does not oppose the progress of human sciences. But, that we may not be said to check the progress of the mind, must we suffer it to proceed to the destruction of every thing among us? Is its freedom to consist in holding nothing sacred? This unrestrained liberty, now apparent in France, must inevitably impede the advancement of the mind by leading it astray, and by exciting disturbances throughout the kingdom. It was this fatal liberty which caused so many parties and jarring opinions among our neighbouring islanders: it was this spirit of independence and rebellion, which, with them, shook the throne, and laid it in blood; and which will end by depriving them of that constitution which is now their boast.

"This kind of liberty would occasion effects still more fatal among the French. In their instability of mind, their activity, their love of novelty, and their impetuous and inconsiderate ardour, it would find so many additional means of engendering the most extraordinary revolu-

tions, and of hurrying them into all the horrors of anarchy. Your majesty must have already seen proofs of the traces it has left behind in its passage through your country. Already has it tainted the soundness of the national character: it has introduced, amongst almost all ranks of men, modes of acting and speaking unknown to our forefathers, and at which their fidelity and love for their king would have taken the alarm. Deign, sire, to exert the authority which Heaven has given you, in repressing the licenciousness of writers against religion. It is not only as pastors that we urge this request; but also as members of a state of which we have the honour to compose the first order, and the preservation and glory of which are on many accounts so dear to us."

Following up these pressing and prophetic remonstrances, the clergy denounced to the king, "Christianity Unvailed," in 1767.—"God and Men," in 1769.—"The System of Nature," in 1770.—"Sacred Contagion."—"Hell Destroyed," 2 vols. 12mo., 1769; and several other publications. It even appears, that Lewis XV. was once more alarmed by the predictions of the bishops: he made answer to the deputies of the clergy, at Versailles, that he partook of the fears of that order: "I approve," said he, "of their

zeal. I consider impiety as an evil the more dangerous as it contrives to elude the means adopted for stopping its course. My love for religion, and its connection with the welfare of my government, are sufficient to make the assembly confident of my vigilance. The fresh orders I am preparing to give will be proofs of the particular attention which I shall ever pay to their representations."

It was on this occasion that the assembly of the clergy caused to be drawn up its celebrated "Warning to the French People against the Dangers of Incredulity;" and came to the resolution of rewarding ecclesiastical writers. These, for the most part, wrote so very ill, that the result of their productions was an opinion, that the doctrines they defended were problematical, and required investigation.

The parliament was not willing to remain a silent spectator of these clerical labours. A decree of the 18th of August, 1770, condemned to the flames the works above mentioned, as denounced to the king by the French clergy.

In the assembly of bishops, 1772, the prelates renewed their remonstrances.

"In this instance," said they, "the advocates of impiety too audaciously pervert the art of writing, in order to break the ties of christianity and those of dependence. . . . . Impious

books are become a general plague that desolates the nation. . . . Hence the effervescence of men's minds, and that lamentable change in the public morals which is daily going on before our eyes. It is our indispensable duty, sire, to represent to your majesty, that, in several provinces, the protestants hold assemblies for the exercise of their religion: these are no longer concealed by the secrecy and obscurity under which they were formerly endeavoured to be screened from the magistrates. We shall not dwell, sire, on the dangers which these associations may cause to the state."

The king, in his answer, promised to stop the circulation of bad books, and to keep the calvinists within bounds; but died two years after the last assembly of the bishops of his kingdom, without having fulfilled his promise.

These remonstrances of the clergy against the philosophers; the decrees against their works; the stigma of the magistrates, who condemned them to be burned and torn to pieces; were all impotent, and nugatory. The periodical assemblies held by d'Alembert, baron Holbach (the generally reputed author of the System of Nature), madame Helvetius, madame Geoffrin, &c., had more influence on the minds of men, than all the remonstrances of the clergy, and the decrees of the parliaments.

PIECES

RELATIVE TO

THE ALLIANCE

OF

FRANCE

WITH

THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA;

AND

TO THE PARTY OF THE DAUPHIN, FATHER OF LEWIS XVI.

THAT OF THE DUKE OF CHOISEUL, &c.

OBSERVATIONS

On the Defensive Treaty of Alliance concluded between Lewis XV. and Maria Theresa, signed on the 1st of May, 1756: a Work written by Order of the Dauphin, Father of Lewis XVI.; finished on the 1st of July, 1756; transmitted by the Dauphin to the Abbé Bernis, Promoter of the Treaty; and sent, by the Abbé, afterwards Cardinal Bernis, to his Agent the Abbé Mourette, in order that the latter might make Observations on it: and, finally, given by the Abbé Mourette to C. Soulavie, to be included in these Memoirs, as a Voucher of the Facts adduced in them.

WHEN the king determined to choose for his principal ally a sovereign who, next to him, holds the first rank in Europe, he had apparently two objects in view; the one, near and immediate; the other, more extensive and remote.

It seems as if the neutral convention, signed on the same day as the treaty of alliance, had secured the first of these objects, which was, indubitably, to avoid a war by land: but it may also be observed, that this object would have been but imperfectly attained, if, leaving the two nations in a state of rivalship, they had not

guarded against a predicament in which one of them might have been induced to break the convention by an immediate advantage, and by the almost certain hope of gaining a great superiority over the other. In considering things under this point of view, the neutral convention is the principal object, and the treaty of alliance only an accessary, a means by which to secure it.

But if we have cause to wish that our allies may form this opinion of the measure in question, because, in that case, it will no longer appear a marked change of system, the court of Vienna must form a very different idea of it; if indeed we attach any importance to its manner of thinking on the subject.

But, if we consider how far our honour is concerned, we must own, that the system of Europe is changed by the recent treaty, and that this change is our principal object.

If that were not the case, we should have incurred the blame of insincerity, and that without gaining any real advantage.

If it was not our intention to change our political system, we have deceived the empress; since, in order to secure ourselves against her attacks, we have sworn an attachment to her which is foreign to our hearts.

If our intention was to alter the old sys-

tem, we were induced to it either from the necessity of choosing between this alteration and the dangers with which we thought ourselves threatened—and then of two evils we chose the less; —or *we thought the new system preferable to the old one.* Such, I believe, was our real motive for deciding in favour of the new alliance.

For it cannot be said, that we did not intend to change the system, since, on that supposition, we must, when we signed the treaty, have been determined to break it on the first opportunity; or we must have been convinced, that the treaty of alliance was not inconsistent with the old system; two things which are not to be supposed.

Our intention, therefore, was to alter our system; and, in reality, we have altered it. The proofs of this point I will immediately give.

What are the advantages of this change? What disadvantages may result from it? These points it is my intention to discuss; and I shall conclude my observations with some hints as to the conduct we ought to pursue, in order to avoid being the dupes of our new ally.

§. I. *Our intention was to change our System, and, in reality, we have changed it.*

NOTHING made it necessary for the king to treat with the empress; he might have objected to the neutral convention; and, when he signed

that, he might have refused to set his hand to the treaty of alliance. It is true, that a war by land would have proved an inconvenient diversion of our strength, under existing circumstances. It was necessary to make our greatest exertions by sea, with the view of acquiring, on that element, the superiority which the English contend for against us with success. But this diversion was not much to be apprehended.

What means had the empress of annoying us, besides those she possessed during profound peace? It is true, we had a fleet to create, and to equip; but this expence was not inconsistent with that required for the invasion of the Low-countries. The protection of Italy we could entrust to Spain: the reasons which induce England to keep on good terms with that power, and the influence which the king of Great Britain would have had, in such a predicament, over the state-council of Vienna, and in warlike operations, formed an ample security for don Carlos and don Philip: it is true that, from that moment, we must no longer have relied on an alliance with Spain; but we might have continued to reckon on her neutrality; and an alliance with her ought not, in my opinion, to be rated at so high a price. Our accession of strength from that alliance is not equivalent to

the predicaments of danger and expenditure into which we may be drawn by it.

The Spanish possessions are far more extensive and weaker than ours; more foreign troops are, therefore, requisite to defend, and derive advantage from them in times of war. Thus, for a Spanish alliance not to be burdensome to us, the Spanish fleet must be stronger than ours; or, which amounts to the same, the Spanish fleets must be contiguous to the Spanish possessions, as the French fleets are adjoining to theirs; which is not the case. Now, whatever is deficient in this proportion of strength, must be supplied by us, and contribute to weaken our power. It is evident, therefore, that an alliance with Spain was not much to be desired; and that we might very well have renounced it in favour of Italy, the neutrality of which we ought to have purchased by this sacrifice.

This being admitted, the empress could attack France in no quarter but on the Rhine, or in the Low-countries. On this head, we may ask a general question: What advantage could she have expected from attacking us? and by what means could she have made her attack with any degree of facility? We could rely on the neutrality of the Germanic body: were we to fear the effects of English subsidies? Suppose that England could bear the expence

during the first year of the war, would she be able to do this during the second, and the third? How can it be imagined, that an Austrian army, without allies, without strong holds, could have made good its position upon the Rhine?—could have entered Alsace, and maintained itself there? I can see nothing formidable in such an invasion. The Low-countries, therefore, form the only remaining quarter from which an attack might have been made upon us.

On this point, several reflections are obvious. Can the Low-countries, in their actual state, be the seat of war during several campaigns? Had we to fear an irruption into French Flanders? Or, if we had grounds for a contrary hope, what country must have become the theatre of war? It must have been shifted to the United Provinces, or to those states which compose the Lower Rhine. In a word, what measures do we suppose would have been adopted by the states-general? Had we cause to fear that they would become our enemies? &c.

I pause; and, from all the reflections that can be made on the subject, I draw this conclusion, that a war by land was by no means probable; and that it could have been attended with danger to the empress alone.

Hence it follows, that it was her interest to preserve neutrality; and that we ought not to

have paid for it. If we acted wrong in purchasing neutrality, by a stronger reason, we were more to blame in the price we paid for its guarantee. We had a sufficient security in the empress's want of power. The conclusion of the treaty of alliance was, therefore, merely a voluntary gratuitous measure: whence we may infer, that the object of it was as great and as interesting, as the act itself is new and important.

For more than a century, France has supported an advantageous contest against the house of Austria. The administration of cardinal Richlieu formed the epoch of a revolution to which the genius of that minister, the alliance with Sweden, and the extreme weakness of the Spanish monarchy, all contributed. France maintained the superitoriy she had enjoyed ever since the treaty of Munster. The treaties of Utrecht, of Rastadt, and of Baden, confirmed a prince of France in the possession of Spain; and conferred the sovereignty of the Low-countries, and of Italy, on the only Austrian prince who then remained. From that period, the German house of Austria was more formidable to France than it ever had been since the time of Philip II. It had no weak side but in the Low-countries; and if, from peculiar circumstances, it lost a part of Italy, it is not the less true, on that

account, that warfare in that country is against France; and that there she ought rather to gain influence by her credit, than by attempts at signal military exploits.

But, if the Low-countries now constitute the weak side of the house of Austria, if that be the quarter in which it is most vulnerable, we must not hence conclude that to wrest those countries from it is an easy task; because several potentants have an interest in the preservation of them.

On the side of the Rhine, we have made a conquest of every part that was situated advantageously for us; and we have put it out of the power of the house of Austria to molest us in that quarter: but this state of impotence is in a great measure reciprocal. It is, therefore, evident, that if rivalship and jealousy exist between France and the house of Austria, the rivalship is not of that species which is the result of vicinity, nor the jealousy hardly at all the effect of such fears as are mutual, and of which the motives are immediate and at hand. It is a rivalship of power; and a jealousy excited by the desire of superior rank and influence. But this rivalship is not the less real on these accounts. We ought to foresee what may happen; and to thwart the rival power in those projects of which the execution

might place it in a condition of being injurious to us.

Two neighbours, whom neighbourhood alone has made enemies, may be reconciled for ever, because they can annihilate this motive for their disagreement: they can become allies, without being injured by their alliance: it weakens not the strength of their frontiers; it confines not their boundaries.

But with respect to two powers between whom there is no rivalship but that of rank and influence, their allies are their frontiers; the extent of their influence forms their true boundaries.

If such potentates become mutually allied, they cease to have separate and exclusive alliances; they cease, in consequence, to have frontiers: their boundaries become mixed and lost in each other. If, in this state, one of these powers, more cunning than the other, contrives to attach to itsself by secret agreements part of the allies who are, as it were, in common between them, it acquires a superiority over the other, which has not taken the same precaution. These powers are in the predicament of two subjects living under the protection of the laws and of their fellow-citizens: if one of them makes particular friends, and with them is determined on the ruin of the other, he who has not taken for his defence the same precautions

which the other has adopted for his destruction, will infallibly be the victim of his enemy.

Alliances, therefore, between potentates who are rivals in influence are not objects of trivial consequence, since their effect is to put an end to rivalship.

But if this rivalship must *necessarily* continue to exist, the alliance is illusive.

If one of the two rival potentates take advantage of the kind of community of allies established between them by their alliance, that alliance becomes fatal to the other.

In a word, if one of the two potentates be so situated as naturally to have more means than the other of perverting the community of allies, in the establishment of which community he, of consequence, has a stronger interest, the weaker party deserves to suffer all the fatal consequences that may result from an alliance imprudently made.

We have explained the nature of a rivalship of influence. The admission of the existence of this rivalship, and the measures taken by a potentate to acquire influence, form what we call system.

The rivalship which has hitherto existed between the sovereigns of France and of Austria was, for a long time, at once a rivalship of vicinity and of influence; but since the treaty of

Utrecht, it has been a rivalship of influence only. This rivalship must have ceased, in consequence of the alliance just contracted between those two sovereigns: a real change of system has therefore taken place, and the deed which has effected this change is, consequently, as important as it was necessary it should be efficacious.

§ II. *Advantages of the new System.*

It must not be deemed extraordinary, that I consider the treaty just concluded as forming the basis of a *new system;* nor that I give this appellation to the predicament in which it has placed us with regard to the rest of Europe.

The experience of all ages has taught us, that action is as necessary for bodies politic as for animate bodies: and that, from this state of activity, a necessary opposition results among the powers of every country. Each of them selects that power for an enemy, which is most in a condition of being injurious to it; or, which is the same thing, it directs against such a power its principal operations. It considers it as its only real enemy; and is ever ready to coalesce with inferior powers, in order to acquire by alliances a superiority which it cannot derive from its own strength: but such alliances are

stable only when they are reciprocally useful: and where there is no common enemy, there is no durable alliance. As soon as Carthage was destroyed, the alliance of the people of Marseilles was despised.

The treaty we have just made, considered in a certain point of view, is no exception to the general rule.

France looked on England as the principal power of Europe in regard to herself. She sought to strengthen herself against this power, by a grand alliance, which might enable her to dispense with a number of small allies; and thus, by simplifying her policy, she was in a condition to combat England with more proportioned forces.

The marine is now her leading object. *We must ruin England.* There lies the main point. We cannot accuse Austria of forming inimical pretensions; she has no views on any of our possessions. What obstacle, therefore, is there to an union with Austria? Spain no longer has any thing to fear for Italy: she may be revenged on England, and divide with us the burden of the war. Holland, assured of her barrier, swears to observe the most rigid neutrality, and leaves us no apprehension for the security of our frontiers. Nothing any longer prevents our withdrawing the garrisons from them,

and employing all our land forces on the coast; where, in concert with those at sea, they will threaten England, so as to divide her attention, and her fleets.

Russia, perhaps, may be an open field for our negotiators, by extending to the northern powers that spirit of reconciliation which has tended to unite the courts of Versailles and Vienna: perhaps we may be able to establish a mutual confidence between those of Petersburgh and Stockholm; and, that point being gained, nothing will hinder the Swedes and Danes from joining all their forces to ours, in order to humble the pride of England.

These are very essential advantages, and such as we could not purchase at too high a rate.

But what will be the situation of France? Allied to the power which, next to herself, is the most formidable in Europe, she will be able to give laws to all her neighbours, and her moderation alone will set bounds to the empire she may exercise over them: she may make the king of Sardinia repent his several breaches of faith; and the king of Prussia, his clandestine treaties: or, should she pardon both, her conduct will be attributed, not to weakness, but to magnanimity; and the honour of it will belong wholly to the generous heart of our monarch. Such a conduct will at all times insure

us allies, should we happen to lose the one we have gained. A just, disinterested, and powerful monarch is sure of his object, when that object is to shelter the weaker powers, and to claim their assistance in opposing and overcoming projects of injustice and ambitious enterprise.

But, whatever may be the final result of the alliance we have just contracted, that result will be so remote, as to enable us to derive from the alliance all the advantages we could expect from it.

England will be humbled and punished; its fleets weakened, or destroyed; our colonies will be unassailable; our marine will have acquired a permanency of strength; and peace will have consolidated all these advantages, before the empress can think it her interest to swerve from the conditions of a treaty of her own creation; and for the conclusion of which she has been long prepared:—a treaty which she has long ardently wished for; which she considers as her own contrivance, and, indeed, as the masterpiece of her policy. In all this, there is nothing but what indicates a very long duration of the new alliance, and that our advantages from it will be nearly infinite. Let us however examine, whether we have not good reasons for the belief, that the bands of this alliance will soon be untied;

and that its disadvantages will be at least equal to any benefit we can derive from it.

§ III. *First Disadvantage—This Alliance cannot be durable.*

I HAVE said, that France was induced to form this alliance with the reigning empress, from a conviction, that England was our real rival, and the expectation of being so strengthened as no longer to stand in awe of that nation, but, on the contrary, of being able to reduce its power.

I agree, that England is the rival of France in maritime affairs. But what power, next to France, holds the first rank on the continent? What power can vie with her for a superiority in influence and credit, from which the real superiority of offensive strength necessarily, in the course of time, results? The power which holds this rank in Europe, were it actually inferior to France in strength and influence, is the real rival against which sound policy ought to guard her: a rival, of which she ought to watch all the motions during peace, from having invariably seen that rival at the head of her enemies in times of warfare.

The more I reflect on this subject, the stronger is my conviction, that Austria continues

to be the power I have been delineating, as she has been for more than two centuries.

If this point be granted, France must be considered as having two rivals: one on the continent, in the house of Austria; the other on the ocean, which is indubitably England.

Whence then has it happened, that these two powers have not concerted measures for a well-timed attack on their common enemy? For the nature of their mutual interests requires them to be allied.

England has been seen to contribute her share of men and money towards the support of continental wars. How came Austria to take no part in a war by sea? not even by causing a diversion? We must not, in my opinion, conclude, that, by not doing this, she has proved herself to be no longer our rival; nor that, in becoming our ally, she has renounced her alliance with England. What motives can induce her to place confidence in us when our contest with England shall be at an end? She must expect, that we shall oppose her views of aggrandisement; and that we shall not consider a treaty as a security for the continuance of her good-will, when ours shall have become of no use to her.

She must therefore expect, that, in order to make sure of her alliance, we must limit her

power; and hence she must conclude, that no advantage can result to her from her connection with us: and that, moreover, it will only last as long as our dread of England shall extort from us a little complaisance and much dissimulation.

Thus, the predicament in which we stand with regard to England, is the only security on which the reigning empress can rely for the permanency of our attachment to her interests. And what security have we for the continuance of her good-will to us? It cannot differ from the motive which induced her to court our alliance; which, certainly, was no other than the fear in which she stood of England. Hence, one defect becomes manifest in our alliance, as it appears not to rest on mutual apprehensions and mutual interests.

The vicinity of the king of Prussia, the weak state of the Low-countries, and, perhaps, a want of power in the empress to attack us at the present moment, are considerations which have probably concurred to induce her to form an alliance with us.

If she dreaded our power, we have been wrong in relieving her from that dread: and, in this case, we relinquished our superiority, from the moment in which we became her ally.

If the power of the king of Prussia was an

object of terror to her, was that power also an object of terror to France, its natural ally?

Assuredly not: for our last treaty with the king of Prussia was sufficient to prove, that we did not consider him as a dangerous enemy.

How then can we depend on the permanency of an alliance, founded on motives so very inconsistent, that the most evident proofs of a continued rivalship between the two contracting powers are the result? — The empress treats with us, because she stands in fear both of us, and of our ally, the king of Prussia.

We treat with her, because we fear her; and because we are attacked by the English, who are her allies.

This alliance was therefore contracted, from hatred to the English on the part of France, and from hatred to the king of Prussia, on the part of the empress.

Concerted measures are the natural result of an alliance: but what concerted measures can be adopted by two contracting powers, whilst the principal ally of one of these powers is the principal enemy of the other?

Shall we say, that an union between the kings of England and Prussia constitutes a power equally formidable to the sovereigns of France and Austria, and that against this power

they ought to have united their strength?—This supposition cannot be allowed, unless we admit such an union to be indissoluble: but, it is the very reverse; it is a forced treaty with both the contracting parties, extorted by their mutual apprehensions. How can such an alliance be considered as a sacred tie uniting two powers, and rendering their union so formidable, that two other great powers should feel the necessity of entering into an alliance against them, and sacrifice mutual jealousies which had existed for several ages? If it be true, that allies are not the result of treaties, but of interest, I think that things will soon return to their natural channel, and that each party will resume its accustomed alliances and animosities.

We must not suffer the king of Prussia to be overwhelmed*, because the awe in which the empress stands of his power is our surest guarantee, in what relates to her: the empress will not see England totally ruined, because, from that moment, she would apprehend, that her alliance with us would become unsettled and precarious. What are we to think of an alliance which does not reconcile us with the allies of the empress, nor make her the friend of our allies? Such

* This was however the hidden drift of Maria Theresa, concealed from the abbé Bernis, and not discovered till the administration of Choiseul.

an alliance would require, either that both sides should remain inactive, in which case allies would be of no use, or that one of the parties should sacrifice its allies, or that both should make such sacrifice.

Let us examine, whether any of the three expedients be practicable: if not, it will follow to a demonstration, that the new alliance cannot be of a durable nature *. If it be possible for two powerful princes to make a mutual, sincere, and complete sacrifice of their projects of aggrandisement, and of every species of ambition, it is impossible so to ascertain their sincerity in such a sacrifice, as that each may have an entire reliance on the other. The most positive declarations, even oaths, may be no more than proofs of an actual intention, and not a sufficient guard against future possibilities. State-interest includes innumerable predicaments in which a sovereign may repent of his engagements; and pretexts are never wanting for the purpose of varnishing his breach of faith, or even throwing the blame on the party who is not

* It lasted, *apparently*, thirty-six years, and till the revolutionary war; but it was broken, *in reality*, by the partition of Poland, in which Austria, to its own advantage, deprived us of an old friend, and of a valuable ally. This loss, and the increase of the military and territorial power of the house of Austria, have convinced France of the necessity of increasing in its turn its territorial power, in order to make head against the augmentation of the Austrian forces.

guilty of it. In a word, such engagements as I am supposing are always considered as momentary and personal; to be modified by innumerable tacit exceptions, which it is impossible to include in positive conventions or limits, because princes have not the disposal of contingencies.

No predicament therefore exists, in which a reliance can be placed on the mutual promises of sovereigns in contracting perpetual alliances; and it would be the extreme of imprudence to rest our measures on such a reliance.

The intentions of the reigning empress certainly do not appear at all equivocal: she wished for the alliance which has been contracted: after mature deliberation, she has preferred this alliance to that of England; but, in becoming our ally, she expected that our alliance would be advantageous to her; she expected to derive greater advantages from it than she had drawn from her connection with England. What are these advantages? This is the point we have to examine.

§ IV. *Advantages which the Empress expects to derive from this Alliance.*

Was it the view of the reigning empress to avoid a war with France? If this wish was the only motive for her conduct, we have gone be-

yond the mark in our alliance with her. Such a project cannot act as a motive for insuring a perpetual alliance, since it implies, in a much greater degree, a kind of fear, and a decided opposition of interests, than that confidence and identity of interests which are the very soul of alliances.

We must not therefore suppose, that the fear of war was the motive for an alliance, on the part of the empress; the less so, as this motive moreover cannot from its nature be reciprocal. Must we trace the inducement to the misconduct of England, who tyrannised over the court of Vienna, and at length gave that court a disgust for an unequivalent alliance?

If such be the motive, it is the more weak, as it has no essential point of interest for its foundation: and if the empress appears to have taken so important a step only to throw off a yoke, which she could not be compelled to bear, we may justly apprehend, that she will one day relinquish our alliance with equal levity. The empress could withdraw herself from the state of servitude in which England held her, by at length determining to act a leading part, and no longer submit to the dictates of the king of Great Britain. For this purpose, so strict an alliance with France was by no means necessary. Did she throw off one yoke only to put on an-

other? Was it her deliberate object to place herself in a state of dependence on France, as she had been on the king of England? If such was her design, can we rely on the stability and duration of so extraordinary a resolution?

The more I reflect on the views of the empress, and the various ramifications, as I may call them, of the ambition of Austria, the stronger is my conviction, that the empress was weary of meeting France in the way of all her projects; and of expecting from England those succours, and that increase of influence, which she had all along been promised, but which the house of Austria had invariably purchased, by the adoption of measures suited to the interests of England much more than to its own, and, as the price of English aid, by the loss of part of its territories, whenever France rendered abortive their united enterprises.

The empress had observed, that, for more than one hundred and fifty years, warfare and negociation had been incessantly to the disadvantage of her power; though, during the same period, both had contributed to the aggrandi e-ment of England. Hence she concluded, that England considered her in no other light than as a convenient tool, to be more or less respected, accordingly as the idea prevailed of her assistance becoming necessary: this she felt more than ever

in the present instance: when the English, to all appearance, were compelling her to adopt such measures as would be useful to them, while they were prejudicial to her own interests. In a word, she has disengaged herself from ties that were fatal to her; and that without renouncing her projects; but, on the contrary, with the full resolution of rendering their success, more than ever, secure: she has become the ally of a sovereign who, in no case, can require her aid; because, whilst at peace with her, he can want assistance from none but maritime allies: a sovereign by whom she has ever been thwarted; who alone has the power of impeding her views; and a claim on whose good-will she expected to acquire, by simply swearing to be ever his friend and ally.

It is worthy of remark, that, by this conduct, the empress has sacrificed none of her allies. Great Britain is the only power that can complain of her at the present juncture: but this ally, with all its power, can in no way be useful to the empress but by means of subsidies; and the loan of those subsidies, on the part of England, relates wholly to the preservation of the Low-countries. Now, the nature of this object is invariable; and, by her treaty with us, the empress has saved England the expences in which she must have been involved by a con-

tinental war. It is even doubtful, whether the empress has served or injured England, by becoming our ally: if the opinions of the English patriotic party be founded, she has rendered England a very essential service, by preventing that nation from being a dupe, and from expending, without advantage, sums of money by land, which may be much better employed in naval operations.

The king of Sardinia also may, perhaps, complain of the new alliance: but he is not an ally to be lost or gained by variations in the general system. Situated between two powers which, separately considered, are equally formidable to him, but which never can unite for his destruction, his permanent system is to take advantage of the moment, and to turn the quarrels of his neighbours to account, by selling himself to the highest bidder.

Russia is, in no shape, affected by the recent treaty between the two powers, to the one of which she is nearly a stranger; and only allied to the other from motives wholly foreign to the actual treaty. We may even assert, that if Russia be interested in the treaty, it is only as she may derive advantages from it; since the empress, from her alliance with France, is placed in a condition of attacking the grand-signior, or defending herself against him, far more ad-

vantageously than she could have done either in any other predicament: whence it follows, that the czarina has much more reason to rely on her co-operation, in case of hostilities from the Porte, or should she have occasion to attack that power.

I make no mention of the Dutch. The new treaty effects no change in their situation with relation to the empress. Their connection of interests remains as heretofore, and their friendship as invariable as their interests.

It is evident, therefore, that the empress has not sacrificed any of her allies: and, that point being admitted, it is unnecessary, to prove, that she had no intention of making them a sacrifice to her new alliance; for she certainly did not intend to go beyond what was requisite in the actual posture of her affairs.

But, it may still be asserted, that she, effectually, and as far as it was in her power, sacrificed the king of England, since she abandoned his cause at the time when he called on her for assistance. I have already answered this objection: but, to remove it entirely, it will be sufficient to shew, that this dereliction is of no consequence. For the result will be this, that, owing her no more than a parity of conduct, we ought to make no sacrifices to her but such as are merely apparent. It is possible, and even

probable, that from the first, the king of England had formed a plan for exciting a general war in Europe. But it is evident that he had relinquished this plan before the conclusion of our alliance. Of this point, his treaty with the king of Prussia is an incontestable proof. For, notwithstanding my assertion, that this treaty was the result of reciprocal fears, it is evident, that the king of England might have declined concluding it, from the very motive which hastened its conclusion. The king of Prussia was in awe of the Russian power, and his fears induced him to treat with England. But how came the latter to relieve her enemy from apprehensions which she had herself endeavoured to create? The king of England had either excited these fears only with a view of bringing him to a treaty with himself; or, after negotiating with Russia for an army of sixty thousand men, he was apprehensive, that the advantages he might derive from this force, might not counter-balance the enmity of the king of Prussia. In either case, he has effectually renounced the project of a general war; since, on the one hand, he has rendered his alliance with the czarina of no use to that project; and, on the other, by guaranteeing Silesia to the king of Prussia, he has put it out of his power to offer the empress a sufficient inducement to take up arms.

To the latter, therefore, no part remained but to follow the example of the king of England, in giving to France, and receiving from her, a promise of strict neutrality; after this first step, it became a matter of indifference to England, whether the empress might or might not proceed to a second, by making an alliance with the French monarch. The only clause in this alliance which might displease England, would have been the promise of mutual assistance: but the empress extended her concern for the interests of England so far as to except out of the defensive alliance the only case that would probably exist for a length of time.

I do not maintain, that the sacrifices made by France have more of reality in them than those made to France by the empress queen: it was not, in my opinion, intended, that any of the king's allies should be left at the mercy of their natural enemies; nor do I believe that any idea was conceived of so fettering our operations, as to render the good-will of the king of no avail either to those who have a right to claim it, or those who are indebted for it to his bounty: and if, in what I have to add, I may seem to suppose, that these were the natural consequences of the recent treaty, it will be only to set in the clearer light my observations on the conduct we ought to pursue, in consequence of our new alliance.

§ V. *Disadvantage attending the Alliance—A faithful Observance of it incompatible with more natural, and consequently more essential, Alliances—Inquiry as to what Alliances are natural to France.*

WHAT I have to add will complete the proof, that our recent alliance cannot be durable, since I undertake to show, that it is as incompatible with our other alliances, as it is little calculated to coalesce with those of the empress.

When two powers give mutual promises of perpetual amity, they are pledged mutually to procure for each reciprocal advantages, and to assist one another nearly on all occasions. I venture even to assert, that such promises almost imply, that neither of the two powers should undertake enterprises not approved of by the other, or in which that other may not have occasion to share. The reason of this is, that the nature of a war is almost always problematical, when we wish it to be so; whence it follows, that if mutual succour be so inherent in the nature of the war, and so dependent on the terms of the treaty of alliance, that a faithful observance of its engagements proves the only motive that can induce us to take a part in the war, it will almost invariably happen, that the nature of such a war will become a matter in dispute between

the two parties; and while one party contends that it is defensive, the other will maintain it to be offensive, as an excuse for not being concerned in it. Such a dispute will give rise to coolness; and, whether it may end in a refusal or a grant of the succour demanded, it will necessarily occasion reciprocal dissatisfaction and disgust, the almost sure forerunners of a rupture, or of marked indifference. We may, therefore, assert, that an alliance is insecure, when it seems to admit a case in which one of the two allies will have occasion to claim assistance from the other, and when it will be the interest of the latter not to comply. On these principles, let us examine the alliance in question.

Till now, the following have been the natural allies of France: 1. the grand-signior; 2. the king of Prussia; 3. such princes of Germany as have at heart the preservation of the Germanic liberties; 4. Sweden; 5. the kings of Spain and of the two Sicilies; 6. the republic of Genoa.

The king of Denmark is also an ally of France; but his alliance bears no direct reference to the house of Austria: the necessity of counterbalancing the power of the Czarina, and of maintaining an equilibrium between her and Sweden, has formed the principle of that al-

liance, at present strengthened by maritime interest.

The Spanish alliance has long rested on no foundation but the interest, which the infants of Spain have in the fate of Italy. A more powerful and essential interest, but liable to greater revolutions, may, henceforward, be the bond of this alliance. Meantime, the affairs of Italy will always greatly interest the court of Spain; and suffice to direct its choice in alliances. The present state of Italy does not compel it to be hasty in this choice; it may remain on good terms with the court of Vienna; and its amity with that of France may be undisturbed by storms, during the life of the king of Spain; because this prince, under the guidance of his queen, will concern himself little about the affairs of Italy; and hardly think of adopting provisional measures for the possible event of his dying without issue; in which case the empress and the king of Sardinia might lay claim to the states of don Philip, as theirs by reversion.

But this juncture of events is not the less inevitable on that account; and it must evidently prove fatal, either to the new alliance, which we must relinquish in order to protect the Spanish princes, or to the system of Italy, which will be shaken by the reversion of three

dukedoms, as it will take from the king of Naples the barrier intended for him, and destroy the balance of power in that country.

The Genoese, forgotten in the treaty of alliance, although they have points of interest to settle with the court of Vienna, will necessarily lose all that confidence in us, which our possible want of their assistance has heretofore inspired: they will endeavour to gain new protectors; and will, of course, entrust their interests to the two powers, whom now they consider as their oppressors.

From this change will result the moral impossibility of assisting the kingdom of Naples, should it happen to be attacked by the house of Austria. Our influence over the court of Rome will suffer a prodigious fall. Thus, far from remedying the defects in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, we shall experience all its disadvantages, without the hope of any benefit from our complaisance. Should we wish to act on different principles; should we favour don Carlos in the plan he certainly forms of reuniting the crowns of Naples and Spain, or of leaving the former to one of his children; or, should we undertake to support don Philip in the possession of the three duchies, whether he do or do not ascend the throne of the two Sicilies; we shall be obliged to break with our new ally.

Here then is a rock, against which this alliance, and this perpetual amity, on which we seem to rely, must necessarily split.

Before we quit the south of Europe, let us examine how we have hitherto been circumstanced with reference to the Ottoman Porte; and what our situation must be in consequence of our new alliance. Till now, we have had the same enemy. A rivalship of vicinity on the part of the grand signior, and a rivalship of influence on that of France, have constituted the bond of our union with the Porte, and the pledge of its good will toward us.

What an effect must have been produced on that court by the signing of a treaty, which not only severs its interests from ours, but is, on our part, a promise of declaring against that power, should it commence hostilities against the empress queen? Much time had not elapsed since we had solicited from the Porte a declaration, similar to that which in 1749 spared us the renewal of war; and we have given the Ottoman ministers reason to believe, that, at the moment we were requesting that declaration, we were endeavouring to form a close alliance with the power, against which we were urging our solicitations!—But let us lightly pass over this circumstance. It is an inconvenience in our treaty, which we cannot repair; let us see what must be the

consequences of it: for this is a point that lies within our view, and, consequently, of importance to be foreseen.

The discredit into which we must have fallen with the Porte, not only from the form of our late proceeding, but from its very essence also, may give rise to disadvantages of more than one kind. Should the Ottoman ministers adopt a rigid interpretation of our promises to the empress, they will cease to regard us as useful allies; and may seek revenge on our commerce for the exposed state, in which we shall be supposed to have left them. Far from consulting us on the time and mode of their operations, they will conceal them from us; and we shall no longer have the means of suggesting to them such as we may deem advantageous to our views. So long, however, as they undertake nothing that can endanger the tranquillity of Europe, we may remain, with regard to them, in a kind of indifference, which may not perhaps be very injurious to us. But, should they attack the empress, we must either fail in our engagements with her, or furnish the stipulated succours in men and money. One way or other, we shall lose our Turkish ally; and perhaps offend him to such a pitch, as to ruin our commerce in the Levant.

If the grand-signior should commence a war

against Russia, it is almost certain, that the empress will act as an auxiliary, and, from that moment, denounce hostilities against the Porte. This will likewise be a case of our alliance, and our embarrassment from it will be the same. Hence, it is obvious, that we confine the Ottoman empire to a state of total inactivity in Europe; from which should it rouse, far from being of any use to us, its first act of hostility will be the shoal, on which will be lost, perhaps for ever, the ancient alliance we have maintained with it.

Should Sweden be implicated in our certain disgrace at Constantinople, she will lose an ally, in whom she found her chief security on the side of Russia; but, whatever may be to her the event of things, it is evident, that, being no longer upheld at Constantinople by the influence of France, she will there lose a great part of her credit, and have still less to hope for in future. It is, moreover, obvious, that, however well-disposed, the divan will not be able to take the part of Sweden against Russia on so large a scale as heretofore. Till now, if apprehensive of attacks from the united forces of the two empires, Russia and Austria, the Porte might expect a diversion in its favour on the part of France. This hope is done away by our new

treaty, and the danger is not lessened; at least, not in an equal proportion. And we must not expect to see the empress adopt our allies, and Sweden least of all, in such a manner as to act, in their defence, against Russia: nor that she will hesitate to join the latter power in a war, which she will have provoked from the Turks by an attack on Sweden.

We may therefore rest assured, that, by our treaty, we have changed the best part of our northern system; and that, in consequence, this system is greatly weakened. Let us follow it up through its other branches, and see whether it have sustained any farther injury.

The king of Prussia, though singly too weak, is an essential ally of Sweden. Secured against opposition from the grand-signior by his own influence, by that of France, and by similarity of interests, he might openly declare in favour of Sweden: he was in a state of safety, and could, without risk, take part in the affairs of Poland. At present, he has much more to fear from the Porte, as I have just proved to be the case on the side of Sweden: he is open to attacks from the empress queen; he is no longer seconded in Poland by the French party. Should the king of Poland die, and the empress be desirous of filling that throne by a king of her own creation, what

part shall we have to act *? A great revolution may take place in Sweden, aided, perhaps, by the king of Prussia, who may hope to convert that power into a useful ally: which revolution may cause it to be lost to us, and complete the destruction of its monarchy. In foreseeing these misfortunes, I ground them on the supposition, that the terms of our alliance with the empress will be adhered to by us with the utmost punctuality.

On the same supposition, I might venture to predict a protestant confederacy, which would be joined by the king of Prussia, the king of England, Sweden, Denmark, and all the princes of the empire who are attached to the reformation. In fact, they must consider us as their enemies, whilst we act in concert with the emperor as good and faithful allies: and not the protestants only, but such of the catholics, also, as are attached to the present system, may form an opinion of us equally unfavourable; if they see that our conduct, in what relates to

* That of silence, and submission. She has since conferred that crown on one of her favourites: and it was with the view of keeping it at her own disposal, that she subsequently engaged in a variety of impolitic and unjust enterprises, which ended in the final partition of Poland.—But, as the above question originated in 1756, and was then put to the abbé de Bernis, and to the duke of Choiseul, the answer must be referred to those two ministers, and to their adherents.—(Note from the author of these Memoirs).

them, is influenced by our deference to the empress. But this must happen, or we must renounce her alliance: for so differently are we situate from her in what concerns the empire, that we shall have no favours to solicit on her part; whereas, she will require from us not to prefer princes (in whose good-will we have no interest; in whose affairs, no concern; and whose measures she will not fail to depict in unfavourable colours) to her, who is a principal member of the empire; to the emperor, who presides over it, to whom it would be humiliating not to carry his point, and whose honour will be considered as greatly concerned in each transaction. Against such disparity of influence, all we can urge will be the duties imposed on us as guarantees of the empire; duties so solemnly and repeatedly sworn to, or claimed: we can allege only the necessity of maintaining the present system; of preserving liberty to the Germans; and a barrier between our frontiers and the Austrian provinces.—Such language will be considered by the empress not as that of an ally, of a perpetual friend; but as that of a half-reconciled enemy, an eternal rival. Yet, if we do not hold this language, and act conformably to it, what will be the fate of the system of the empire? And if, under cover of this alliance, which will have taken from the

Germans the guaranty of their liberties, and have added strength to their oppressors, they be bound in chains which they can never shake off, shall we find ourselves, if a rupture which we must admit to be possible should take place, in the same condition, in which we were before we signed the treaty?

I shall here add nothing to what I have remarked concerning the king of Prussia. I shall merely observe, that his power enables him to render great services to a potent ally; that it makes him very formidable to his neighbours; and that his first attacks are tremendously impetuous: but that, with all this, he cannot become the leading party in an extensive war; that France will never have cause to dread him, because she is out of his reach; and that, as all his advantages must be gained by the rapidity of his motions, he must always require the co-operation of an ally, against whom the forces of his enemy may be compelled to turn: for, if such a power as Austria, which has great resources, should contend singly with the king of Prussia, the latter might obtain some advantages, at the beginning, but Austria would be revenged at the close of the war. Hence we must infer, that an alliance with the king of Prussia may be very useful to us; that his power cannot give us cause for alarm; and

that he can never take the lead while united with us in military operations. We must not, therefore, apprehend, that he will ever be able to take from us our superiority of influence, or to render our interests dependent on his own.

But all this we have to fear from our recent alliance. It is very possible, that, as allies of the empress queen, we may act no more than a secondary part: and this can never be done to our advantage; for this princess and her successors will always consider, that we may detach ourselves from their alliance, and from that moment become again their principal antagonists, and form the natural counterpoise of their power.

§. VI. *What Conduct we ought to pursue in Consequence of our new Alliance.*

If we have no reason to rely on the durability of our new system, we must look forward to the change, which will reestablish that we have just relinquished: but, above all, we should be convinced, that, as our alliance with the empress can be neither durable, nor advantageous to us, no considerable sacrifice ought to be made as the price of giving it more consistency.

Its principal advantage cannot last beyond the duration of the war with England; whence

it follows, that, if we owe civilities to our new ally, the effects of such civilities should be as transitory as their motive. Our first care ought, therefore, to be to encourage such of our allies as have been alarmed by our treaty; and to convince them that we understand our own interests too well, to sacrifice them to a reconciled enemy, who, sooner or later, will return to her habits of sworn hatred against us.

Above all, let us take care not to suffer the empress to gain over us such an ascendancy, as was acquired by the king of England after the treaty of Hanover. We still remember the subordination in which he held our ministry, and the errors into which we were led by that subordination. Let us continue to take the leading part, since that belongs to us; and if it be true, that the empress had more reasons for being desirous of the late treaty, than we had for giving it our assent, let us take care to remind her of this, and not forget it ourselves: and, without actually breaking with her, let us leave her to imagine that we are always ready to do so. Let us avoid, more than all, every kind of engagement, that might render her alliance too necessary for us; and let us join her in no enterprise, the execution of which would render us dependent on her.

This fault was committed by the court of

Madrid, in signing the treaty of Vienna; it placed itself in a state of entire dependence on the bounty of Charles VI.: and this monarch was fully determined to show very little kindness to a court he detested, and which he was resolved not to allow to get footing in Italy.

From our reconciliation with the head of the empire, let us take the opportunity of increasing our influence in Germany. Let the states of the empire be assured, that, without losing an ally, and a guarantee of their liberties, they have acquired a powerful protector with their sovereign: let us avail ourselves of this favourable opportunity, to regain at the diet of Ratisbon all, that a predicament entirely the reverse of this caused us to lose there in 1727.

By this line of conduct we shall be sure very soon to disgust the empress with our alliance, the inutility of which she will perceive from the care we take not to be the dupes of it. But, in one way or other, she will certainly break with us, whenever the dereliction may suit her interests. Let us not endeavour in vain, therefore, to prop up an alliance, which will always be ready to fall: but let us try to secure, at the period of its destruction, a position at least as good, as that which we occupied at its formation.

In signing a treaty with the court of Vienna,

the king's aim was to avoid a continental war. Such is the main object of the treaty: its separate clauses are merely accessory; but they are not the less inviolable on that account, because every consideration must yield to that essential interest of kings, the reputation of good faith, and of steady perseverance in all their engagements.

If it be true, that the king declared to count Starenberg, that he would assist the empress not only with the twenty-four thousand men promised by the treaty, but, should they be wanted, even with all his forces; this declaration is one more sacred engagement, from which it is impossible to recede. This admitted, the king has no longer an option for war or for peace. The empress has the power of engaging him in a war, which, of course, must be general, and may be very long.

The king's finances, being diverted to other objects, will no longer be exclusively employed in refitting the fleet, and providing for maritime warfare. Our object is lost in that very quarter, by means of which we had reason to expect its attainment.

If the king of Prussia continue to insult the king of Poland; if that prince, as we are told, be not reconciled to him; I offer no expedient for avoiding a war with the king of Prussia.

He has been our ally: he may be so in future; it will be unfortunate perhaps for us to have contributed to his humiliation; but let these considerations be overlooked, and let us arm against an overbearing sovereign, who respects no law. But, if the accommodation have succeeded, or be on the point of settlement, let us consider what are our true interests; and this not with a view of breaking our engagements, but of rendering them consistent with each other. We have promised troops to the empress: let her have those troops. We have promised to guaranty the king of Prussia in the possession of Silesia: let us be mindful of our guaranty*. It is an imperious, independent deed, binding in all cases, and contracted for with all Europe: let us declare, that we do not consider ourselves as having annulled our guaranty, because we could not do it; at the same time, let us declare, that we disapprove of the invasion of Bohemia; and that our assistance was promised to repel that invasion, not for the purpose of making conquests.

We have entered into solemn engagements with the two belligerent powers. These must

* This advice cost the dauphin very dear. The object in view was to restore Silesia to Maria Theresa, when madame de Pompadour prevailed on the king to pursue a line of conduct, in the war of seven years, diametrically opposite to that which he had followed in the war of 1740.

be fulfilled: they are equally sacred. We have guarantied the possessions of both; and on this footing only can we carry on war. With this line of conduct, the empress may not be satisfied; but she cannot require of us what we are unable to perform without the violation of our treaties *. Let us add to the above declaration what may possibly create in her a disgust for the war, viz. the offer of our mediation; and let this mediation be founded on our respective treaties, as these ought to form the basis of the treaty we should have in view.

To this mediation the king of Prussia will probably agree, on receiving from us a positive promise, that we shall exact nothing from him, but what, as guarantees, we have a right to require. On this condition he will offer to suspend hostilities; and only wait for the accomplishment of this measure, till the empress has accepted our mediation. By objecting to this, she will show that conquest is her aim; and if her refusal will not authorise us to withdraw the succours stipulated by our treaty (succours no longer required for the security of our provinces, since the king of Prussia will have disclaimed the intention of retaining any of them), she will, at least, be prevented from requiring

* This is precisely what she did require.

additional reinforcements; as these were only promised in cases of necessity; and as such a necessity will no longer exist, after the king of Prussia's acceptance of our mediation on the terms which I have denoted.

If we suppose the king of Prussia will refuse our mediation, we ought, notwithstanding, to persist in the declaration, by which I have said the offer of it ought to be preceded. And it is manifest, that the two belligerent powers will soon grow tired of a war, the result of which, they will perceive, cannot be advantageous to them, since we shall be obliged to have all things restored to the predicament in which they stood before the war; and this does not imply, that the views of the empress were confined to Silesia; for that is not the only province guarantied by us to the king of Prussia; we are also responsible for the security of all that his ancestors gained by the treaty of Westphalia; and, if I mistate not, France is guarantee for what he has inherited in Cleves and in Juliers.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE MEMOIR
ON THE TREATY OF 1756.

I PERCEIVE, on perusing the above memoir, that I ought to have added:

1st. That we have nothing to fear on the side of Italy, as that country remains in a state of neutrality.

2d. In what relates to the advantages derived by the empress from the treaty, to those I have mentioned we must add, that of not increasing her expenditure, while ours is excessive; and of being, in consequence, enabled to cause victory to lean on the side of the English, if, at the close of a long war, which must have drained our resources, we gain the upper hand; or of plundering us, if our defeats and the war itself reduce us beyond a certain level.

3d. The empress has declared to the English, that she neither had relinquished nor intended to relinquish any of the preceding engagements made with them. If this declaration be sincere, what will become of Dunkirk, the dismantling of which was guarantied by Austria? If she withhold her guaranty, her declaration is

false, and she breaks her engagements. What, in consequence, can we expect from her? If she pledge her guaranty, what becomes of our alliance? But, if she act the part of a mediatrix, what kind of a treaty will she compel us to make?

4th. We have guarantied to the empress all her rights: has she not a right to make Ostend a commercial town? If she undertake this, how are we to act? This right may perhaps be disputed with her, reasoning on the principles of the treaty of Munster: but how very harshly must such arguments sound when coming from the mouth of an ally!

LIST

Of distinguished Persons at the Court of LEWIS XV., *recommended to* MARIA ANTOINETTA, *Archduchess of Austria, by her Mother,* MARIA THERESA, *the Empress, at the Time of her Departure from Vienna, to marry the Dauphin of France, afterwards* LEWIS XVI.

THIS list is inserted, because it lays open the character of the two opposite parties then existing at court. It is given in the precise orthography of the empress.

List of Persons of my Acquaintance.

The duke and duchess of Choiseul.
The duke and duchess of Praslin.
Hautefort.
The Duchâtelets.
D'Estrées.
D'Aubeterre.
Count de Broglio.
The Brothers de Montazet.
M. d'Aumon.
M. Gérard.
M. Blondel,
La Beauvau, the nun,
Her companion.

The Durforts.—To this family I desire you will on all occasions give proofs of your gratitude and attention.

The same to the abbé de Vermont. I cordially interest myself in the welfare of these persons. My ambassador has orders to promote it. I should be sorry to set the example of deviating from my own maxims, which are to recommend no one; but you and I are too much indebted to the above persons, not to endeavour to serve them on all occasions, if it can be done without too much *impegno*.

Let Mercy be your adviser.

I recommend to you, in general, all who are

natives of Lorraine. Render them every service in your power*.

LIST

Of several Persons recommended by the Dauphin to that Son who should succeed LEWIS XV.; *(entrusted to MM. de* NICOLAI, *with several other Papers).*

M. DE MAUREPAS is an old minister in disgrace, who, as I understand, has preserved his attachment to sound principles of policy, which madame de Pompadour misunderstood and betrayed.

* This attention to persons at court discloses the party spirit kept up by the empress in France. She had ordered her ambassador, count de Mercy, to provide for their interests: she pointed out, without exception, all who were natives of Lorraine, a province in which the family of her husband, Francis the First, had all been born, and where the house of Austria took great care to secure a party, who could never forget their former sovereigns. This was a corner-stone of Austrian policy. The idea of showing attachments without too much *impegno* does credit to the refined conceptions of an intelligent woman, who knew how to colour and shade her sentiments. The duke of Choiseul is justly placed at the top of her list: he was the leader of the Lorraine and Austrian party, which he had been the first to organise in France. The Montazets were wholly bought over by that party; so decidedly, that the abbé Montazet became afterwards the archbishop of Lyons, through the interest of the duke of Choiseul, in consequence of his jansenistical opinions, and the spirit of persecution which he dis-

The duke of Aiguillon descends from a family, which has acquired fame by that political system, which sooner or later France must resume for its own safety. He will acquire experience with age, and may be useful in many respects. His principles in favour of royal authority are untainted, as have been those of his family, without exception, reckoning from cardinal de Richlieu.

My father dismissed M. de Machault, a man of a stubborn character, with a mind a little warped, but an honest man. He is hated by the clergy on account of his severities against them. Age has very much softened his temper.

M. de Trudaine is highly reputed for honour, attachment, and extensive information.

Cardinal de Bernis is at length rewarded for

played against the sulpicians, and in general against the jesuit-party.

As to count de Broglio, the empress must have been completely deceived by that skilful politician. He was at the head of the famous secret combination, which never ceased its exertions against the interests of Maria Theresa, in privately thwarting the Austrian alliance of 1756.

Count de Broglio was a man of too much honour to sell his secret or his country. He was even persecuted by prince Kaunitz: the recommendation of Broglio, therefore, results from those incomprehensible modes of conduct adopted by many negotiators, skilful in the art of disguising their principles, when they have any, or of professing a great variety in them, according to circumstances. The profound secrecy ever observed by the agents of the secret combination, under count de Broglio, leads to the belief, that he belonged to the former class.

the services he has rendered the house of Austria; but his political system relative to that power was formed with more moderation than that of the duke of Choiseul. He was dismissed because he had not done enough for the empress, and because he did not forget, that he was a Frenchman. If he soften his too well-known resentment against a powerful party among the clergy most attached to our house, he may become very useful.

M. de Nivernois possesses wit and the graces: he may be employed on some embassy, where these qualifications are absolutely necessary. That is the place for him.

M. de Castries is fit for the military department; he is a man of honour and of information.

M. Dumuy is Virtue in person. He has inherited all the good qualities, which I have heard attributed to M. de Montausier. His virtue and honour will prove inflexible.

The MM. de St. Priest have owed their rise to madame de Pompadour; but they have capacity and ambition. The father must by no means be confounded with the son, or with the chevalier. The latter may in time become a very useful member.

Count de Perigord is a man of prudence and probity.

Count de Broglio is possessed of activity, sense, and political information.

Marshal de Broglio has talents for command, in case of war.

Count d'Estain is skilful in his line.

M. de Bourcet is a person of solid information: so is

Baron d'Espagnac.

M. de Vergennes is qualified for an embassy. His mind is correct, well informed, and capable of conducting affairs that require time, on the sound principles.

In the parliament, and in the families of the presidents, there are men of talents, who are strongly attached to their duty. Some few of this stamp are also to be found among the counsellors.

The character of the president Ogier renders him fit for intricate and boisterous negotiations: but in the magistracy are found men of heated minds, and some connected with others, incapable of being employed elsewhere than in the parliament, on account of their restless dispositions.

As to the clergy, M. de Jarente has brought up too many of that body, who are altogether unworthy of notice. He has adopted a plan in opposition to that of his predecessor, who wished to see clergymen of exemplary morals and attachment to religion. The choice of M. de Jarente has fallen on too many persons who resemble him.

The bishop of Verdun is too well known to stand in need of recommendation: so is his family, of which the loyalty is conspicuous.

The duke of la Vauguyon is also too well known to require eulogy. The task of rendering his pupils men of honour, discernment, and extensive capacity, was too near his heart for him ever to be forgotten. I observe the same of the other persons employed in the education of the princes.

As to the aged bishop of Limoges, his virtue, candour, and delicacy, are sufficient recommendations.

There are other persons well deserving of praise; but, beside having employments, they are connected by friendship or affinity with those above mentioned. Of them I shall say nothing.

The archbishop of Paris, Beaumont, must be considered as one of the pillars of religion, which the royal family, from conscience and interest, is bound to support, *cost what it may.* The tender mother of my children will say much more on this subject: she will well know how to distinguish what is right from what is wrong; it is not necessary here to show how very worthy she is of the most profound affection.

PIECES

Relative to the Death of Queen MARY, *Wife of* LEWIS XV.; *of the* DAUPHIN, *Father of* LEWIS XVI.; *of the* DAUPHINESS; *and of Madame de* POMPADOUR.

INTENDED FOR THE ELUCIDATION OF THESE MEMOIRS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It has been thought proper to insert here the opinions, which criminate M. de Choiseul, and those which acquit him, relative to the deaths of the queen, mistress, and children of Lewis XV. The author of the Memoirs has annexed his own distinct opinion on the subject, with some general remarks on accusations of this kind, which are found in almost all historians. These remarks may serve as an antidote to the vulgar credulity of many readers, and to the negligence with which many historians treat a subject of the greatest delicacy.

On the Death of Madame de POMPADOUR, *by Count de* MIRABEAU, *Author of the Memoirs of the Duke of* AIGUILLON.

"WHEN apprised of the duke of Choiseul's audacity, madame Pompadour took the alarm: but, very unfortunate for her, the same moment which opened her eyes to danger, opened those also of the duke of Choiseul: this was when the blindness of his protectress, madame Pompadour, was nearly at an end. The instant he perceived she had disengaged herself from him, he pronounced her irrevocable doom. She was seized by a mortal distemper, the effect of poison prepared for her by the duke. The wretched marchioness felt her daily decay, and knew the cause of it. The strength of her constitution enabled her to struggle, for some months, against the strength of the poison: but she fell a victim to it on the 15th of April, 1764, with this single regret, that she left the king she had invariably loved in the power of the duke of Choiseul.

Thus her life was the forfeit of the error in her choice: and the haughty minister, no

longer perceiving any curb to his ambition, was so daring as to hope that his sister, madame de Grammont, would gain the same ascendancy over the king, as had been possessed by the late marchioness:—that the same distinction, title, influence, and authority, would devolve on her; and that she would serve him as a ladder to attain the power of a mayor of the palace, the grand object of his desires.

But the king bore in mind the innumerable misfortunes caused to France by madame de Maintenon, towards the close of the late king's reign. He was apprehensive of finding in the duchess of Grammont a female tyrant of a different kind: he stood in awe of her extensive capacity; of her close connections with the whole of her party, still so powerful in France; and of her acquaintance with all the important affairs conducted by her brother, or rather by herself. The king was weary of that kind of sway, which madame de Pompadour had assumed over him: her he did not regret; and he was resolved no more to be the slave of such stubborn ties. He had lived with the duchess for a short space of time; and had not disguised his approbation of her manner, and taste in pleasurable amusement:—but, encouraged and aided by some of his confidential servants, he had, in this instance, sufficient strength and sagacity of mind, to resist all insinua-

tions for raising her to the rank of his public mistress: because, between that and very great influence, there was but one step; and, for gaining this rise, the duchess, he knew, was possessed of every mental requisite. The king, accordingly, gave a flat denial on this occasion; and the Choiseuls were obliged to prepare other batteries. Artifice was familiar to them; and, in cases of great moment, they were very skilful masters."

Anecdotes relating to the Death of LEWIS, *Dauphin of France: by M.* D'ANGERVILLE.

"NEARLY at the period of the death of madame de Pompadour, the dauphin, till then in the bloom of health, was perceived to fall into gradual decay. He insensibly grew thin; the freshness of his complexion diminished; and paleness effaced the fine bloom of his cheek. It cannot be denied, that an inward weakness wasted him away: endeavours were made to find out the cause of this disorder, and each person formed his own conjectures. It has been asserted, that this prince had tried to free himself of a cutaneous eruption; and that the humour, being repelled without precaution,

had settled on his lungs. But, as the dauphiness never communicated this anecdote to the person who wrote the memoirs of the life of her illustrious husband, it must be considered as a fiction. It is more probable, from what she intimates through the medium of those memoirs, that sorrow for injuries sustained by the cause of religion, and, above all, the suppression of the jesuits, formed the chief foundation of his disorder. Be this as it may, after deriving a glimpse of hope from the use of grapes as his only diet, this prince, having undergone excessive fatigue at Compiègne in the military exercises, which were his delight, was seized with a violent cold, and it was soon perceived, that his lungs were affected. He would not suffer any alterations to be made, on his account, either in the return from this journey, or in that to Fontainbleau, from which place it was found impossible to bring him back. The king's behaviour to him, during his illness, was just what it had been to madame de Pompadour, every attention being paid to outward appearances. He condescended to remain at this very gloomy and unhealthy place till his son expired. But the last moments of that prince's existence were counted with impatience; and exhibited a scene to the illustrious dying person, for which he found an only consolation in his religious

sentiments. From his bed he beheld all that was going on in the court before the palace; the contemplation of which, at times, gave some alleviation to his sufferings. As he drew near his end, and as the departure of the court was fixed for the instant at which he should expire, each person was busy in getting ready before the general breaking up of the court, the confusion of which was sure to be considerable. The dying prince saw the packages thrown from the windows, and the people busily loading the waggons with them. To la Breuille, his physician, who wished still to divert his mind from the idea of death, and to keep him in hope, he said:—'It is high time I should die, for I keep too many persons in a state of impatient expectation.'

"The king had ordered his first chaplain not to quit his son during his last moments, but to receive his parting breath. On the appearance of the prelate, he concluded that all was over. Without a moment's hesitation, he sends for the duke of Berry, the eldest of his grand-children; and, after addressing him in terms suited to the occasion, he conducts him to the abode of his illustrious mother. On entering, he thus addresses the person in waiting; "Announce the arrival of the king and the dauphin." The princess understood the meaning of this unac-

customed formality; she cast herself at his majesty's feet, and implored his protection for her and her children."

Opinion and Testimony of Marshal de RICHELIEU, *contained in a Note sent by him to* MIRABEAU, *Author of a Publication, entitled,* MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE OF AIGUILLON, *concerning the Death of the Dauphin, Father of* LEWIS XVI.

"THE dauphin, that worthy prince, so little known for thirty-five years of his life, though he deserved it so much; that excellent son of so good a father, had led a life of great retirement during the troubles occasioned by the influence of the mistresses: a kind of influence which he tacitly condemned, but which he did not make a subject of discussion, from the respect he bore to his sovereign.

"Seeing his father, after the death of madame de Pompadour, entirely devoted to her children, so as to pass his whole time with them, he thought he might disclose, more than hitherto, the feelings of his heart.

"The encampment at Compiègne seemed to give him a new state of existence. This prince, no less affable than virtuous, visited the

soldiers, relieved their wants, introduced his princess to them, and addressed them as his comrades and friends, so as to inspire them with a degree of admiration amounting to all but delirium.

"But, as it was neither the wish nor the interest of the ruling minister, that the dauphin's reputation should rise so high, as to make it impossible for the king to refuse him the degree of confidence he deserved, that is, his entire confidence, M. de Choiseul lost no time in getting rid of so powerful a rival. The nature of the sickness and death of this best of princes is well known. Many times has he told me, that he knew he owed them to the deep schemes of his enemy, the duke of Choiseul. But it would be superfluous to dwell, in this place, on details, which ought not to be connected with the subject of my present discussion."

Anecdote of Marshal RICHELIEU, *concerning the Death of the Dauphin, Father of* LEWIS XVI., *contained in his Notes transmitted to* MIRABEAU, *Author of a Work, entitled,* MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE OF AIGUILLON; *an Anecdote which seems to indicate the Opinion of* LEWIS XVI. *of the Death of his Father.*

"QUEEN Maria Antoinetta has been taught to

hate M. Aiguillon: she has been incessantly surrounded by persons of rank, who spoke unfavourably of that minister. M. de Choiseul negotiated her marriage, and procured her a crown: she owed him gratitude; but is this gratitude to require the sacrifice of her very existence, and of the welfare of the kingdom? In her favourite project, she will never succeed. She was too hasty in recalling M. de Choiseul, in 1774. After the disgrace of M. d'Aiguillon, in 1775, she fancied herself the sovereign on the day of coronation. On the succeeding Wednesday, she ordered the exminister to wait on her at two o'clock in the afternoon, when the king was present. His majesty was not prepared for this interview. The queen flattered herself with the idea of overcoming his objections, and that she should immediatly prevail on him to call a council at Reims, which M. de Choiseul might attend, during the absence of M. de Maurepas. On the entrance of M. de Choiseul, the king uttered not a word; he drew gently back, and even retired from the apartments.

"The queen, therefore, lost her object, having been as ill advised as served on the occasion; and it is known that, two days before the coronation, when M. de Choiseul presented himself at the ceremony of kissing hands, the king withdrew his hand with a frown of disgust, as if

he feared the approach of the *poisoner of his father;* a horrid appellation given to Choiseul by M. de la Vauguyon. The aversion of this prince is of long standing; and such early impressions are never to be effaced: accordingly we perceive, that, during a space of five years, the queen has made no alteration, in this respect, in the sentiments of her husband."

On the Causes of the Death of the Queen of LEWIS XV. *Opinion of the Duchess of* AIGUILLON, *and that of her Son, one of the Deputies to the Constituent Assembly.*

"THIS note was sent to the author of these memoirs on the express condition, that it should not be published during the life of madame d'Aiguillon; or if within that period, accompanied by a declaration, that she was not the author of it. The mother and son, after perusing the work, entitled, MEMOIRS OF AIGUILLON, gave the editor of the memoirs the notes, corrections, and additions, which conclude them; and those which I here add, on the death of the queen.

"M. d'Aiguillon never solicited indemnification for the troubles and vexations he underwent in Bretany. He was satisfied with receiving, in

that province, the amount due to him as governor: and when, at the close of very long and expensive sessions of the states, he was forced to ask for pecuniary supplies, he went so far as to bring to account the thirty thousand livres which it is customary for the province to allow the governor; as also the fifteen thousand livres, which had been sent as a present to madame d'Aiguillon. Thus, far from enriching, he impoverished himself in Bretany.

"M. d'Aiguillon did not ask for the king's regiment; for, he was at Aiguillon: the letter addressed to the king, which the queen condescended to deliver, was written by madame d'Aiguillon. In that letter, no mention was made of the vexations in Bretany, but of the services only of M. d'Aiguillon; and of the promise made to him, in the king's name, by marshal de Belle-Isle, when the affair at St. Cast was in agitation, of the first vacant promotion: and this, in consideration of its having been impossible to create him a marshal of France, as was the king's original intention, because his rank of lieutenant-general was only dated from the preceding May. M. de Choiseul being informed, that the queen favoured M. d'Aiguillon, and that she had presented the above letter to the king, declared publicly at table; 'The queen solicits for

M. d'Aiguillon, and I for M. Duchâtelet; we shall see whose suit is preferred.' The queen died shortly after, the victim of the duke of Choiseul."

Refutation of the preceding Opinions relative to the Causes of the Deaths of the Dauphin and Dauphiness of France, of that of the Queen, and of Madame de POMPADOUR, *by M.* D'ANGERVILLE, *Author of the private Life of* LEWIS XV.

"WE are not ignorant of the reports which have been spread concerning these successive deaths, all of them extraordinary, though each different from the others, all slow, all foreseen, all fixed at certain periods, settled, and, as it were, periodical; but we consider them as merely resulting from the heated imaginations of a certain class of politicians, who are greedy for romantic anecdotes, and think the most dangerous crimes as easy to be committed as to be conceived. These reports spring from a former supposition, that the attempt to assassinate Lewis XV. was the consequence of a deep-laid plot. And as crimes, of which the perpetrators are unknown, are always imputed to those who are benefited by them, the horrible suspicion

was extended even to the presumptive heir to the crown. Unhappily, or rather happily, what tends to confound the suggestions of these sinister diviners is, that madame de Pompadour stands first on the list of victims:—that no one can reasonably believe the person, who poisoned that favourite, to have been the same who administered poison to the dauphin, the dauphiness, and the queen * ;—that, on this supposition, we must admit of two sets of court-poisoners, who, in opposition to each other, by turns exerted themselves as rivals in the commission of these atrocities; and did this without any expectation, but that of impunity: whilst the king, authorising these execrable practices, at least by his silence, must be supposed to have found a savage satisfaction in seeing persons the most dear, falling victims around him. Such a scene of prolonged and terrifying slaughter, unless we impute to Lewis XV. the heart of a Nero, or the dissimulation of Tiberius, must have kept him in perpetual torments; torments not to be endured by the most hardened in villainy. These are the contradictions, the absurdities, the abominable consequences, that must result from the admission of a fact, without which, however, the others are unlikely, and must fall to the ground. In all

* Why not? See p. 271 and following. T.

probability, the only murderers, if any, were the physicians."

Opinion of the Prince of SALM *concerning the Causes of the Fatality among the Children of* LEWIS XV.

THE prince of Salm, in the month of July, 1787, when relating anecdotes of the court of France, at madame Jaucourt's, declared himself convinced, that the children, the queen, and favourite mistress of Lewis XV., died by the machinations of the duke of Choiseul, and those of his sister, the duchess of Grammont. He dictated to us the following lines, which were part of a Christmas carol produced at court, wherein the minister was berhimed, according to the custom of those times, and gave me permission to quote the authority in these memoirs.

Grammont! incestuous duchess! hence, depart
To realms of endless night; and with thee bear
Thy cup, full fraught with poison's deadly art,
An off'ring fit for horrid Brinvilliers!

There Pluto sits, impatient for thy race;—
That race! so suited to the murd'rer's rack!
Welcom'd by all, Choiseul shall take his place
With Damiens here, and there a Ravaillac.

Brinvilliers was a notorious female poisoner in the reign of Lewis XIV.

Opinion of the Abbé de LAFFREY, *Preceptor to the Prince of* SALM, *and Author of a Life of* LEWIS XV., *for which that Prince communicated several Anecdotes, concerning the Fatality in the Royal Family.*

M. Arnoux de Laffrey, when present at the conversation of his pupil relative to the court of Lewis XV, copied, with me, the lines above quoted: but his opinion did not entirely agree with that of the prince of Salm. In his Memoirs of Lewis XV., he thus explains his sentiments: "As unproved crimes are always attributed to the party who derives advantage from them, the suspicion fell on the presumptive heir to the throne." (Concerning the attempt to assassinate Lewis XV., by Damiens.)

"Shortly after, a celebrated courtier was suspected of having committed all these crimes, and his name was inserted in some verses, but little known, written for the entertainment of the court at Christmas."

The abbé de Laffrey then quotes the lines already given, as he had received them from the prince of Salm.

Opinions of Madame de ELAVACOURT, *Sister to the three favourite Mistresses of* LEWIS XV., *and Maid of Honour to the Queen, on the same Subject.*

Madame de Flavacourt was a conscientious, sincere, and witty woman. I for the most part owe to her the curious court-anecdotes, concerning her three sisters, preserved in the *Memoirs of Marshal de Richelieu.* I requested her to tell in what light she considered the reports spread concerning the causes of the fatality among the children of Lewis XV. She was much attached to the queen, and to the dauphin. Her answer was in the following remarkable words :—

" M. de Choiseul's party had the audacity to accuse the dauphin of having employed Damiens; and that unfortunate prince, who knew this, was overwhelmed with grief on the occasion; for he was by no means guilty of the crimes imputed to him. The duke of Choiseul, who hated him, was accused, in his turn, of a similar crime, when the death of the dauphin, with that of his wife, and of the queen, was perceived to approach; all whom M. de Choiseul held in execration."—Let it be remarked, that madame de Flavacourt does not, in her answer, accuse the duke of Choiseul. She says, that the

partisans of the duke of Choiseul accused those of the dauphin as the authors of the attempt to assassinate Lewis XV.; and that the dauphin's party, in their turn, accused the party of Choiseul of having occasioned the death of the posterity of Lewis XV.

The conclusion is, that there were two violent parties, which endangered the tranquillity of France; and accused each other of these extraordinary crimes, without proving them.

Anecdotes of the Sickness and Death of the Dauphiness, Mother of Lewis XVI. dictated by Marshal de RICHELIEU; *communicated to the Count de* MIRABEAU, *and published by him in a Work entitled,* L'Espion dévalisé—The Spy robbed of his Budget—*Intrigues of the Court of Lewis XV. in* 1767, *with respect to the Dauphiness.*

THE work from which I shall extract this article was strictly prohibited, and secretly sold in 1784. It merits no little attention. It gave great uneasiness to its author, who was persecuted on account of it by Hue-de-Miroménil, keeper of the seals.

"At the instant of the dauphin's death," says M. de Mirabeau (the 20th of December, 1765), "the dauphiness, in her first paroxysm

of grief and anxiety, requested of the king, 1st. Permission to be as near as possible to his person, and the means of being so: 2dly. The liberty of watching over the tuition of the princes her children in a special and privileged manner, as superintendant of their education: 3dly. That she should retain her rank at court.

"The king granted all these requests. His affliction was great. After having fixed his family at Versailles, the king retired to Choisy alone, and remained there above a week, to avoid the ceremonies of new-year's-day. None were allowed to accompany him, but they who were in immediate attendance on him. There were no lists of lords; which gave room for a private decision.

"The familiar entries were occasionally at variance with the service; but as in 1765 there remained only the count de Clermont, and the count d'Eu, who had the familiar entries because they had been educated with the king, the court was in reality confined to those who were in waiting. The marquis de Marigni advanced, that, in the absence of the superintendant of the buildings, his place of director-general gave him a right to the familiar entries in a more distinguished manner, than if he were simply in waiting. M. de Choiseul opposed this pretension, particularly as he could not be with the

king on this journey, the intrigues of which he dreaded: but the king admitted the marquis de Marigni, and excluded all his ministers.

"The duke of Aiguillon, who was at this instant agitated by all the tumults of Bretany, and deprived of his protector, obtained of the king full powers, by availing himself adroitly of the occasion. In fact he repaired to his province on the 28th of December, 1765, changed the face of the whole administration there, and carried the removal of the affair of Messrs. de la Chalotais to St. Malo.

"M. de Choiseul found himself under the necessity of temporising. He even followed and punctually executed the plan traced out by the duke of Aiguillon, till, having continued to shuffle the cards anew, every thing fell again into confusion at the end of a few months.... But I am not required to give an account of M. de Choiseul's administration; my object is to speak the truth respecting the death of the dauphiness.

"After the first moments, which nature consigns to grief, the dauphiness was desirous of engaging seriously in the important task, which she had imposed upon herself. She had carefully collected all her husband's manuscripts, notes, and extracts; particularly such as that good prince had endorsed in his own hand,

papers for the instruction of my son de Berry. The dauphiness, who called these her treasure, selected several persons to put them into order. Her confessor, abbé Collet, who had been her husband's likewise, recommended to her one of his friends, to superintend this business, and a methodical plan of education was soon drawn up, of which the dauphin's manuscripts furnished the basis.

"The papers were delivered to the dauphiness in succession, as they were composed. She had directed one Pomiez, now secretary to the commanderies of the count de Lusace, to take them weekly, and transcribe them for her in a fair hand, with the most express injunction, not to speak of them to any person, because she intended to mention the affair herself to the duke de la Vauguyon, whom she wished not to offend, though she considered him as a person unequal to his office: but she had resolved to say nothing to him on the subject, till the moment when she should commence this new scheme of education; which she imagined she might begin to carry into execution at Christmas, 1766, because her year of mourning would then be expired; and she certainly required such a period of time, to familiarise herself with a species of labour, to which she had hitherto been a perfect stranger.

"This affectionate mother considered the em-

ployment in which she was engaged as a sacred duty, and took a pleasure in it not to be expressed. She learned by heart almost all the papers designed for her children. Her memory had been exercised from a very early period: she understood Latin tolerably well, and was familiarly acquainted with Horace. Every day abbé Collet made her repeat to him her lesson of education in her oratory. Nothing could tire the princess, who possessed natural talents, understanding, energy, and a very decided character. In proportion as this unfortunate widow advanced in a lecture, in which the extracts of the dauphin were artfully interwoven, she shed floods of tears. From this sketch it is easy to conceive what influence such an education must have had on young minds, well born, and incessantly guided by the best of mothers. How great the difference between ordinary tutors and such a preceptress! How much better must such affecting lessons be received, than those dry instructions, which must frequently render the pupil for ever disgusted with the labour, to which they are designed to inure him!

"The dauphiness did not confine herself to these occupations respecting the education of her eldest son; she thought of herself, she thought of the welfare of the state: she had a confidential person, who every week informed

her in writing of *what it was necessary she should know.* These were her own expressions. Pomiea was directed to deliver the whole to herself alone; she confessed, that the king spoke to her of many things; and Nicolai, bishop of Verdun, strongly advised her to listen to all.

"This bishop was about to be first chaplain to the dauphiness. Of an ardent, ambitious, and even factious disposition; it was he who, as agent of the clergy, made the following answer to M. de Machault, comptroller-general. "You ring the alarm-bell," said the minister to him. "Yes, sir," answered the bishop, "when you have set every place on fire." These were bold words to say in a full court. It was at the time when the famous affair of the immunities of the clergy was in agitation, on occasion of which Silhouette wrote his book: *Ne repugnate vestro bono:*—Do not oppose what is for your good.

"Such was the state of affairs in 1766, when the court removed to Compiègne. The dauphiness had not yet availed herself of the king's permission to retain her rank at court: she was willing that the first six months, those of deep mourning, should elapse; but on St. James's day she made her appearance, and was thenceforward at court on the days of hunting. She then displayed on some occasions the vigour of

her character. One day among the rest, two eggs being served to her, which with milk, to which she strictly confined herself, constituted her dinner, one of them had a chicken in it. Turning to M. de May, her maître d'hôtel, she said to him: "See, sir, how I am served!" but in a haughty tone, which was spoken of during the remainder of the excursion. The courtiers had long been unaccustomed to hear those masterly phrases, which cut to the heart when properly applied. The sight of this live chick inspired the princess with horror, and a violent cough seized her, which became the sole resource of the furious parties, who were her opponents. The king's assiduities to the dauphiness, however, grew very frequent: every one opened his eyes, and the infernal intrigues were renewed.

"At the death of the dauphin, his widow, as we have said, obtained from the king, that her apartment should be as near as possible to his majesty's: in consequence the king appointed her those which had been occupied by the late madame de Pompadour, and which immediately on her death had been divided by some ladies belonging to the court, and inhabited by them. The removal of a few slight partitions would have been sufficient, to render them fit for the reception of the dauphiness: but the intriguers

against her gained over the old Gabriel, the king's first architect, who, having served Lewis forty-four years, made him believe what he pleased. Gabriel persuaded the king, that his majesty would be in danger in visiting the dauphiness, because the great beams were rotten. This opinion being believed, the construction of new ceilings was the necessary consequence. Yet madame de Pompadour had been dead only twenty months: these beams could not have decayed in so short a time: but the king durst not take any thing on himself, and ordered them to be examined.

"The court remained ten weeks at Compiègne, as it did not go to Fontainbleau, because the king was desirous of sparing his daughter-in-law the sight of a place, where she had experienced such a melancholy loss. But as this monarch could not well dispense with his seraglio for a couple of months, and had not brought it to Compiègne, for want of a convenient situation, he divided the time of his residence there, by passing near a week at Versailles, and also at Choisi, leaving his court in the mean time at Compiègne.

"M. de Choiseul made one visit to Choisi; and there he prevailed on the king, to take upon himself as it were the justificatory memorial, which M. de Calonne presented to him on the

1st of September, by writing with his own hand at the bottom of it, that M. de Calonne had done nothing without his orders; that he approved the whole of it, and gave him authority to print it. Thus the king put himself in the place of M. de Calonne, and consequently became the accuser of M. de la Chalotais, and justified the master of requests in the business of the port-folio. M. de Calonne was accused of having intentionally committed a pretended act of forgetfulness at the vice-chancellor's, in order to give that head of the law an opportunity of reading some private papers, with which M. de la Chalotais had entrusted M. de Calonne, who could not communicate their contents in a notorious, public, and legal manner, except under the mask of giddiness and want of attention, by pretending to let his pocket-book drop out of his pocket, in which he succeeded. M. de Calonne's memorial was printed at the royal press, and dispersed every-where. That man could not justify himself by such a memorial: on the contrary, he avowed facts which the public had reason to doubt, and M. de Choiseul abused the weakness of the king, to make him act an atrocious part in this drama of iniquity.

"The king had promised the dauphiness to inspect the famous beams himself. Gabriel had them uncovered while the king was at Choisi,

and his majesty found them so far damaged, that the architect was not in every point wrong: but it was seen, that they might have lasted longer than the king could live, nay, perhaps than the solid walls. It was resolved, however, that new ones should be put up in their stead. The party flattered itself with having gained its point, and had no doubt but the dauphiness, on their return, would be consigned to some corner of the palace; but the king gave his daughter-in-law all the set of rooms called the Little Apartments, afterwards occupied by madame Dubarry.

"The dauphiness visibly grew more in favour, but she was thwarted underhand in all her wishes. For example, she obtained of the king the place of superintendant to the duchess of Berry for a person in favour with the late dauphin. The next day M. de Laverdi, who was one of M. de Choiseul's pawns that he had pushed forward, made the king sign a decision, by which it was said, "that all newly-created posts should be bought." That of superintendant of the house was rated at fifty thousand crowns.

"The dauphiness understood the trick that was played her. It had been her intention, and the king's pleasure the day before, that this place should be given *gratis* to the person she patronised, in or-

der to fulfil the promise of the dauphin, made at his mother's request. The dauphiness was enraged, and pressed the king. On the day of the first council held at Versailles, after the return from Compiègne, as soon as the king perceived in the gallery the person recommended by his daughter-in-law, he went straight to him, and said: "You shall have your letter, as soon as the houshold can be settled:" then, without waiting for an answer, he returned, and went out at the glass door. This attention of the master was considered as a great favour; but the king scarcely ever acted otherwise on embarrassing occasions. He wished to do something agreeable to the dauphiness, without contradicting his ministers: so that complying with his daughter-in-law, and adhering to the demand of M. de Laverdi, he had nothing to gloss over this inconsistency of conduct, but a civility of manner, which proved at least his good-nature, while it disclosed his weakness. But what a place is the court! Such a wretched trifle gave consequence to a simple master of requests, whom the first minister could not bear, who had neither offices nor pensions, and who was only entrusted with making reports on trifling matters. The duke of Duras, who was desirous of introducing madame de la Pouplinière to the king, immediately applied to the man to whom

the master had spoken: thus can a word, a look, exalt or debase a man.

"In the month of October, 1766, M. de Choiseul, perceiving that the dauphiness increased in favour with the king, notwithstanding all the underhand intrigues against her, felt it necessary to give fresh proofs of his power, that should awe those who kept a watchful eye on affairs. He created six places of counsellors of state, a thing that had not been seen since 1661; made vacant by this manœuvre places of intendants, put all his own creatures into office, and shut the door to others; for he directed, by the decree for creating new places of counsellors of state, that they should gradually be reduced again to the number originally fixed by Colbert; so that there was no longer any stir in the council. By this proceeding M. de Choiseul provided by anticipation for many years.

"The health of the dauphiness, however, which was the true thermometer of intrigues, improved every day. Tronchin was joined with Breuil, her physician, and treated her with wonderful success. The princess had relinquished her milk diet, recovered her strength, dined in public, appeared at the queen's card-parties, and found herself at Christmas in a condition to begin her grand work: but the second mourning

restrained her, for she was unwilling to do any thing before the six weeks, that usually follow the twelvemonth's mourning, were expired. Thus the commencement of her labours was irrevocably fixed for the month of February, 1767. But, independently of this project, her conferences with the king became daily more interesting and more frequent: she proposed her husband's plan, and advanced messieurs de Muy and d'Aiguillon to the ministry with a high hand and no ordinary spirit. As to the keeper of the seals, it was natural that the bishop of Verdun should occasion the choice to fall on his brother, the president de Nicolaï.

"In January, 1767, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, the dauphiness took an airing in her coach every day; and Tronchin was so well satisfied with the state of her health, that he said to abbé Collet, he was strongly tempted to declare to the king, that he considered her as out of all danger, and would be answerable for her recovery. With regard to general affairs, the king gave his daughter-in-law a formal promise, that he would begin the change of his ministry with the keeper of the seals; and things were at such a pitch, that the dauphiness having pledged the king's word to the president Nicolaï, his lady, who was an economist, purchased the necessary linen, which

was cut out and made up at the end of January. The bishop of Verdun had the promise of the nomination of the king of France to a cardinal's hat, and the dauphiness made him treat with cardinal de Luynes for his place of first chaplain, &c. Now Nicolaï alone, seconded by the haughtiness and lofty mind of the dauphiness, was capable of crushing for ever all the Choiseuls, especially as the king required nothing but to be supported.

"Such was the imminent and almost inevitable peril of M. de Choiseul's situation in the month of February, 1767, when Tronchin never ceasing to boast of the health of the dauphiness, and that princess finding herself very well the first Wednesday in February, 1767, *she took the cup of chocolate, which she drank every morning.* The instant after she was taken ill; faintings, and a profuse hemorrhage, ensued..... Tronchin, accompanied by Breuil, immediately went down to the king, and said to him—'Sire, I have been desirous for some days of giving you an account of the health of the dauphiness, and assuring you, that I thought I might answer for her being out of danger.

"'*The crisis, which has just taken place, cannot be owing to any natural cause.*'

"From this moment till the 12th of February, during which time the dauphiness continued in

this state, madame Adelaïde, who never left her, and who lived in the greatest intimacy with her, gave her the *counter-poison of madame de Vérue*, which she had from the princess de Carignan, and which she always kept in her travelling box. Abbé Collet, Pomiez, &c. were present on the occasion, and repeated plainly, without any air of mystery, all the particulars, to any one who would listen to them. Every morning, till the 12th, madame Adelaïde herself made the chocolate for the dauphiness.

"Suspicion fell on Beccari, who kept the little apartments: Dour, the page in waiting, saw him prepare the suspected cup of chocolate: he has said, that he could not conceive how so much time should be required to get a cup of chocolate ready, or why there were put into it so many ingredients, waters taken out of different bottles. Le Dour is at present maître d'hôtel to M. d'Ammecour, counsellor of parliament.

"Till the 12th of February, it was considered as a fact, that the dauphiness was poisoned. The bishop of Verdun and the duchess de Caumont made not the least secret of it; but strange to tell, M. de la Vauguyon, who till the 12th had held the same language with the rest, changed his tone on the day of her death, because he was afraid of being dismissed.

"The report of poison, published by the governor of the royal children, acquiring more importance, this alarming incident occasioned an inexpressible fermentation. The king acted with prudence, and said nothing on the subject: but Tronchin, who maintained the expression of *no natural cause*, would not be contradicted. After all, what did he risk?..... It was his opinion. What was done on the occasion? Sénac was bribed, it may easily be guessed by whom. All the faculty was assembled at Versailles. The body of the princess was opened in presence of fourteen persons, who signed the report, after Sénac had examined Tronchin and la Breuil, touching the fact of poison; of which in reality there was no trace, and the two physicians were silent.

"Care was then taken to circulate this report: madame de Narbonne was brought round: madame Adélaïde, naturally versatile, gave up every point that was desired; and was promised, that she should be superintendant of the education of the princes, which would have put into her hands the distribution of all the domestic favours pertaining to it: so that a few days after the death of that unfortunate princess every thing was quashed.

"But the parties that were crushed did not

slumber. In the first place a violent one against madame Adélaïde arose in the queen's household. It was suggested to her majesty, that the superintendance of the education of the princes devolved of right on her, not on their aunt. Hence it followed, that neither the queen nor madame Adélaïde interfered in it; that the duke de la Vauguyon was frightened out of his wits; and that the abbés and subgovernors continued their trifling themes, their wretched routine. This may naturally be imputed to fathers Trumpzinski and Oneganski, jesuits, the confessors of Maria Leczinski, who represented madame de Narbonne to be a woman of intrigue, and the comments thereon.

"As to the physicians Tronchin and la Breuil, they spoke their minds not loudly, but sufficiently to keep up a party. Astruc strengthened it: and as he was a man of talents, his support gave the more weight to this opinion, because the physicians of the court have always formidable opponents in the physicians of Paris. Besides, how could the reputation of Tronchin, to that time unblemished, be slurred by the attacks of the faculty of Versailles?

"The king was uneasy, and opened his mind to M. de Soubise, and M. de Bertin. The question was reduced to this, whether

there were any species of poison, that could cause a person to die after a certain time (*ad tempus*), without leaving any traces.

"M. Bertin employed Bourgelas to investigate the subject, to which he the more willingly agreed, as he had asserted the fact to be true; in other words, he maintained the existence of poisons *ad tempus*. In consequence he sent to Germany for several tracts, and laboured in concert with la Breuil and Tronchin; so that for more than half a year, if you went to la Brueil's, you would find nothing on his desk but medical treatises open at the article of poisons.

"Bourgelas, who was very intimate with a man of great information, that was indefatigable at finding out any thing, and had lost more than any other person by the death of the dauphiness, concealed nothing from him, and, without accusing any one, told him, that the poison *ad tempus* existed, that it was known at Naples in particular, and that it would be rendering him a great service, to sift some foreigners adroitly on the subject, doing it with great art, implicating no person in the business, and concealing from all the world, that the king set him at work, that the minister had the affair in charge, &c.

"Besides, the matter itself was of such

serious import, as to deserve a thorough investigation.

"The confidential friend of Bourgelas immediately turned his thoughts on abbé Gagliani, to whom he was known. No one could be more capable of furnishing him with the particulars he wanted, then that wily Neapolitan. But this required so much the more art and dexterity, as from the slightest datum the intelligent abbé would have quickly guessed all the rest*."

Opinion of Citizen MERCIER, *Member of the National Institute, on the Deaths of the Royal Family.*

"SOON," says Mercier, "madame de Pompadour died, the presumptive heir to the crown died, his wife died, the king's wife died; they whom M. de Choiseul disliked died. M. de Choiseul had, throughout Europe, a reputation, to which he constantly turned a deaf ear, and

* The emissary of Bourgelas found means to lead Gagliani to an explanation, which afforded the solution of the problem respecting the existence and marks of a slow, infallible poison, leaving no trace behind it.

It was remarked on the information received from Gagliani, that any one who had noted the state of the dauphin in the latter years of his life, from the time when he began to decline, could not have better depicted its symptoms, periods, and gradations.—As to the dauphiness the fact speaks for itself.

which he took no step whatever to efface. The notaries, who took an inventory of his moveables and drawers after his death, paid no attention to this old repute; and many of them, it was said, died just like princes. It is in times more remote, that the light of truth will shine on these historic facts, yet obscured by some clouds." *Fragmens de Politique et d'Histoire, &c.* 'Political and historical Fragments, by Mercier,' vol. ii. p. 307.

"This morning, 2 *Nivose, an ix* (*December* 22, 1800), I asked citizen Mercier what were the grounds of his opinion respecting the deaths of the royal family through the machinations of the duke of Choiseul. He mentioned to me two persons, one of whom is not in France, the other lives there in quiet. Both are renowned for their probity."

Citizen Mercier added, that the assassination of Lewis XV. by Damiens was the first cause of the decay of the royal family: and that from the moment the news spread abroad, the council resolved to shut up the dauphin at Vincennes; for, to his knowledge, the king's upholsterer had received orders to furnish the dungeon of that castle, for the accommodation of the royal prisoner. These were the verbal additions of citizen Mercier to his opinion.

It is certain, that the party in opposition to the dauphin promulgated a report, that the dauphin

was the author of the attempt. Others satisfied themselves with saying, that the jesuits instigated it, to hasten a reign which they were persuaded would be favourable and advantageous to them, and prevent their suppression. But, if the first movement of the council were to confine the dauphin, its politics or its language soon changed: the prince was made president of the council by order of his father, and remained at the head of affairs till the king's recovery.

The Author's personal Opinion respecting the Death of the Dauphin, of his Wife, of the Queen, and of Madame de POMPADOUR. *General Rules for Historians on the subject of Poisonings.*

TOWARD the end of the reign of Lewis XV. the interior of his court was agitated as that of Lewis XIV. had been, when, in the decline of his life, he was deprived of his promising posterity.

Under Lewis XIV., as under Lewis XV., fearful rumours arose respecting the deaths in their families, of which poison was asserted to have been the cause.

Under Lewis XIV. the interested intrigues of the duke of Orleans were cited, and under Lewis XV. those of the duke of Choiseul.

In each court it was the party of devotees, that accused the opposite party of this crime. In each court the desire of reigning was assigned as the cause. In the one case it is the devotee, madame de Maintenon, who accuses Philip d'Orleans; they are the legitimated princes, the house of Richelieu, odious to Orleans, the nobles attached to the king's person, who were exasperated with such rage against Philip, that he asked the king to allow him to go to the Bastille as a prisoner, in order to put an end to their animosity.

Under Lewis XV. it is again a devotee, and of the same party, who appears as the accuser. Madame de Marsan, whose maiden name was Griffet, related to the jesuit of that name, and the principal fomenter of the troubles of the court toward the end of the reign of Lewis XV., was the first who spoke of poison: and surely, if M. de Choiseul alone were guilty of the crime of which that party accused him, he never called in as a witness, or as a confidant, madame de Marsan, or the duke of Aiguillon, or marshal Richelieu. This remark ought to be weighed with attention.

Unquestionably poison has acted its part in the secret history of courts. For, if we find in our annals frequent assassinations, as those of Henry III., Henry IV., Lewis XV., &c. the

method by poison, being less dangerous, must have been more frequently attempted by the horrible calculators on the consequences of death; but the more difficult and complicated this expedient is in its execution, the more is it requisite for the historian to be on his guard against accusations of it. On such occasions he should content himself with relating how parties persecuted each other with blind rage by these strange accusations, and describing the fatal crisis, into which the leaders of factions, such as the dukes of Choiseul and of Aiguillon, reciprocally brought themselves. The situation of the latter may be recollected, when in 1750 he trembled with the apprehension of being brought to the scaffold, or stripped of his honour, by a degrading sentence of the parliament of Paris; while M. de Choiseul, instead of the simple exile, which was all he suffered, had to dread and to avoid more severe punishments, which the duke of Aiguillon intended for him, had they been at his command on the occasion.

The greatest misfortune that can happen to a state, is to be governed by one or two parties, the leaders of which are arrived at such a point, as to have their life or honour to defend against each other. Intestine convulsions are the result of such a difficult situation. The continuance of the revolution was the consequence solely of

the permanent peril of every party raised to power. It ceased, on the contrary, when, on the 18th of Brumaire, the government found itself in a different situation with respect to factions. If the enemies of the state, abroad and at home, should succeed in persuading its chiefs, that their fate is questionable, and their danger imminent, the irascibility natural to man may renew the melancholy scenes of the revolution. Observe with attention the proceedings of the enemies to our present calm. To rob us of it, they propagate alarms, they form accusations, they labour incessantly to provoke the government, to divide it, and to inspire it with suspicion. If it be calm and inirritable, we shall hold on our course.

Such was the situation of the court of Versailles in 1770, on a smaller scale. A sort of terror prevailed there, the leaders of the parties were beside themselves, and in a kind of intoxication and perplexity. Under these circumstances the accusations broke out. In the first, second, and third editions of the Memoirs of Aiguillon, which I have published, I gave my opinion of the causes of the deaths in the family of Lewis XV., and of the famous accusation of poison. In the present Memoirs I will repeat them. The enlightened reader will suspend his judgment respecting the cause of the death

of the dauphin, the dauphiness, &c. mentioned in these Memoirs.

One observation I will make, to quash assertions so frequently rash. It is supposed, that deaths of this nature are caused by a prince to obtain a crown, or by a minister to keep himself in place.

But it should be considered, that, in a state, the interest and advantage of the death of a reigning monarch, or an hereditary prince, are shared among a mass of several thousands of citizens. The possibility and profit of the crime are divided among such a number, the leader of the party is but one of it; and who is the judge that can distinguish the criminal? Are not interest and revenge powerful passions in the breasts of individuals, as well as of chiefs?

I wish the nature of this work would allow me to preserve here all the particulars of the discussion which took place between madame de Flavacourt and me, in the fifth year of the republic, on the subject of the death of her sister, madame de Vintimille. Cardinal Fleury, to preserve his authority, had given the king for a mistress the good, but insignificant, madame de Mailly, the eldest of the three sisters. Madame de Vintimille, the youngest of the sisters, possessed of talents and a daring disposition, died; and, according to madame de Flavacourt, she

was poisoned by order of cardinal Fleury. For upward of fifty-five years, madame de Flavacourt had persuaded herself, that cardinal Fleury was the poisoner of her sister. The family proofs, being thoroughly sifted, were reduced to this, that the cardinal would suffer only a stupid mistress, and that her sister was a woman of sense; that he would allow a mistress introduced with his own consent, but her sister had raised herself to the post; that he wanted a mistress who should be a cipher in the state, and madame de Vintimille was desirous of ruling. In fine, the cardinal, uneasy at seeing Lewis XV. slip out of his hands, was the only person that could gain by her sister's death. I altered the opinion of madame de Flavacourt by a single observation, saying to her, "These are your proofs against the cardinal, I will now counterbalance them by proofs equally strong. Have you forgotten, that the third sister, madame de la Tournelle, afterwards duchess of Châteauroux, had a very artful and very ambitious lover, who was extremely desirous of ceding his conquest to the king officially, still enjoying it in private, and above all, turning it it to his own advantage? Now, madame, it is this dissembling and ambitious lover whom I accuse, and cardinal Fleury I acquit." Madame de Flavacourt acknowledged, that the

accusations mentioned above were but suspicions, and at upward of fourscore began to doubt the respective accusations of the court parties. Courts themselves and revolutions are subject to the terror inspired by those whom they suspect.

Chronological Table of Events relating to the Factions of the Dukes of CHOISEUL *and of* AIGUILLON, *from the Elevation of these two Lords till their Fall; illustrating the public and private History of the last Years of the Reign of* LEWIS XV., *and the beginning of the Reign of* LEWIS XVI.

Observation. The progress of history, and the order of narration, frequently require a chapter (that, for example, of the causes of the treaties of 1756 and 1758 with the house of Austria, and the negotiations preparatory to them) to be written without interruption, and without being mixed with other events of the same date. In such a case the historian is obliged to place contemporary events either before or after the negotiations. Annalists, on the other hand, and they who would compose history according to their particular manner, with those likewise who, after having read events in the body of a work, are desirous of reflecting on them, wish

to have a succinct table of occurrences and their relative dates. It is for the use of the last I have drawn up the following chronological table of the two parties, which will serve, at the same time, to show the literal precision that I have made a point of observing in my labour.

1744. Amour of the duke of Agenois (afterward duke of Aiguillon) with madame de la Tournelle, subsequently duchess of Châteauroux, whose maiden name was Mailly.

1745. *January*. The duke, afterward marshal, Richelieu, parts madame de la Tournelle from his nephew, and procures her for Lewis XV. The duke of Agenois is banished from the king's private apartments, and obliged to serve in the army.

1750. Death of the duke of Aiguillon, first duke and peer of France. The duke of Agenois succeeds to the peerage, and takes the title of duke of Aiguillon, on the 31st of January.

December 12. The count of Stainville, afterward duke of Choiseul, born in 1719, son of the marquis of Stainville, minister to the emperor grand duke of Tuscany, and great chamberlain, marries mademoiselle Crosat.

1751. *November* 6. Abbé de Bernis, afterward

cardinal, is appointed ambassador from France to Venice.

1753. *May* 19. The duke of Aiguillon is appointed commander-in-chief of the province of Bretany; and on the 1st of December, count de Stainville is sent ambassador to Rome.

1755. *June.* Abbé de Bernis returns from Venice; he negotiates at Paris with madame de Pompadour and M. de Kaunitz the alliance of 1756 with the court of Vienna. He is presented to the king.

October. Secret diplomatic committee composed of abbé de Bernis, M. de Machault, M. Rouille, M. de Sechelles, and M. de St. Florentin, for the examination of that alliance. Secret committees of the other part of the ministry inimical to that treaty. (M de Puisieux, M. d'Argenson, and M. de St. Severin, of whom madame de Pompadour gets rid in succession.) A cardinal's hat is promised to abbé de Bernis, and Kaunitz answers for the influence of his court.

1756. *January.* Treaty between England and Russia. Frederic sees the storm rising against him.

February 2. The duke of Aiguillon is created chevalier of the royal orders.

May 1. Conclusion of the first *defensive* treaty of alliance between France and Austria, signed by Rouille and Bernis. Hostilities committed by the English at sea against France.

June. Termination of our former alliance with Russia.

September 2. Abbé de Bernis, who signed the treaty, is appointed ambassador to Vienna, but does not go thither. His secret instructions express, that he should form an alliance with the Germannic powers, to adhere to the treaty signed in May. The first project of uniting France, Austria, Russia, Sweden, Saxony, and the Palatinate, against the Prussian monarchy.

1757. *January* 2. Abbé de Bernis is made counsellor of state. He negotiates with the parliament an accommodation with the court.

January 5. Lewis XV. assassinated by Damiens. The death of the king would have produced a revolution in Europe: the dauphin being the declared enemy of madame de Pompadour and her alliance, Machault and d'Argenson are exiled as partisans of the Anti-austrian system.

February 12. Count de Stainville, ambassador at Rome, returns to Paris, and on the

16th of April is appointed ambassador to Vienna, the abbé de Bernis not going thither, as he is made counsellor of state, and designed for the ministry.

May 29. Count de Stainville is made chevalier of the royal orders.

June 29. Abbé de Bernis is appointed minister of foreign affairs; and Rouillé, who was only the nominal minister, is dismissed.

July 29. Count de Stainville takes leave of the king, and departs for Vienna, where he arrives on the 20th of August, and has a public audience on the 24th.

1758. Unfortunate war of France against Frederic. This prince resists the conspiracy of France, Austria, Sweden, the empire, &c. The battle of Rosbach makes abbé de Bernis and the Austrian committee blush for their mistaken alliance.

The duke of Aiguillon, commander in Bretany, defeats twelve thousand English landed at St. Cast. Two thousand English are killed or drowned, and two thousand taken prisoners. Commencement of the rivalry between the French party victorious over the English at St. Cast, and the Austrian party defeated in Germany. First negotiations of abbé de Bernis for

peace with England. His ruin is resolved on by the opposite party, interested in subduing Frederic, and taking from him Silesia.

October 2. Abbé de Bernis receives his cardinal's hat. Stainville is appointed minister of foreign affairs in his place, and created duke of Choiseul. The cardinal, negotiator of peace, retains his place in the council. Choiseul, provided with the scheme of a second treaty with the court of Vienna, seizes on the chief authority. He exiles the cardinal. Nullity of Lewis XV. since his assassination. Count de Choiseul sent ambassador to Vienna in the place of count de Stainville.

December 30. Second treaty, offensive and defensive, between France and Austria, to confirm the treaty of 1756, and stipulate for subsidies in men and money to conquer and despoil Frederic. Continuation of a war unfortunate by sea and land. Destruction of our navy.

1759. 1760. 1761. } Series of disasters by land and sea of the war called the war of seven years, and fruitless negotiation with England.

Continuance of the rivalry between Choiseul's party and that of the dauphin, father to Lewis XVI.

1762. The duke of Aiguillon, who was the lover of madame de la Tournelle, afterward duchess of Châteauroux, and kept out of the private apartments in 1745 by the king's jealousy, obtains this year the entries of the chamber. He becomes the intimate friend of the dauphin. Abolition of the order of the jesuits.

1763. A peace disgraceful to France. An English commissary established at Dunkirk.

1764. *April* 13. Death of madame de Pompadour. First period of criminal proceedings in Bretany against the duke of Aiguillon, military commander of the province. The parliament of Bretany is dissolved. The two most courageous of the magistrates are imprisoned in the Bastille. Mission of Senac, Lenoir, and Calonne.

1765. *December* 20. Death of the dauphin, father to Lewis XVI.

1767. *March* 13. Death of the dauphiness. Choiseul's party accuses the duke of Aiguillon of extortions in Bretany; and Aiguillon's party accuses the duke of Choiseul with the death of the dauphin and dauphiness.

1768. *June* 4. Death of the queen. Maupeou made chancellor of France, under a pro-

mise to ruin the duke of Aiguillon, whose cause was cited this year before the parliament of Paris.

1769. Restoration of the parliament of Bretany. Resumption of the criminal proceedings against d'Aiguillon at Paris. Choiseul's party threaten him with the scaffold. Cardinal Bernis at Rome, at the election of pope Ganganelli.

1770. The king takes away by military force the papers containing the proceedings against the duke of Aiguillon. Insurrection of the parliaments. Favour of madame Dubarry, called to court by the faction of Richelieu. The dauphin's marriage with Maria Antoinetta.

December 24. Exile of the dukes of Choiseul and Praslin. The duke of Aiguillon succeeds them in favour and authority.

1771. *January* 20. The parliaments are dissolved. The grand council is converted into a parliament. Protests of the princes and peers.

1772. } Division of Poland.
1773. }
1774. }

May 10. Death of Lewis XV. Madame Dubarry confined in a convent. The duke of Choiseul and his sister, the duchess

of Grammont, recalled from exile. The duke of Aiguillon in disgrace.

1775. The parliaments, dissolved by the duke of Aiguillon, their antagonist, are restored by Maurepas, formerly exiled by Lewis XV., by M. Turgot, and by M. de Malesherbes, formerly exiled through the intrigues of the duke of Aiguillon.

1785. *May* 8. Death of the duke of Choiseul; and some time after that of the duke of Aiguillon.

Opinion of Abbé PROYART, *respecting the Death of the Dauphin, Father to* LEWIS XVI.

WHILE this volume was in the press, there appeared in France a few copies of a book entitled Lewis XVI. dethroned before he was King, or A Sketch of the Causes of the French Revolution: London, 1800. In this work, p. 44, and following, abbé Proyart gives his opinion of the duke of Choiseul, and draws a portrait of that minister by no means favourable to his memory. Abbé Proyart was well acquainted with the history of our last dauphins; yet I have not altered my opinion respecting the causes of the death of the father of Lewis XVI.

"The importance of the dauphin's occupa-

tions," says M. Proyart, "was not suspected by the duke of Choiseul. More curious than any one to be in possession of the secret, Choiseul resolved to purchase it by a crime: he hired as a spy a treacherous valet, who concealed from him none of the profound views and continual labours of the heir to the throne: he became acquainted with his studies, his connections, his writings. He discovered, that this prince, whom he would have rendered a stranger to all business, and incapable of it, lived amid men the best informed and of the greatest integrity in the kingdom. He saw, that the dauphin was preparing to exhibit to the world a great king. Nothing gave him so much uneasiness, as to find the dauphin, in a *scheme of government* concerted with the virtuous Dumuy, resolved to escape from the tutelage of vicious courtiers, and reign himself. . . . . Choiseul, alarmed, sought means of preventing the consequences. In council with his accomplices it was resolved to impel virtue into the paths of vice. The courtesan, Pompadour, insidiously pursued this design for some years. Under pretext of a longing, a woman was introduced to him, whose indecent attire betrayed her guilty intentions. The prince turned out the female adventurer, and the marchioness de Pompadour spoke of the transaction in the following

terms: 'A Parisian lady, who was pregnant, longed to embrace the youthful prince, who is as beautiful as Cupid himself. The dauphin observing her neck bare, turned his back upon her, and shut the door in her face. Devotion, you see, has rendered him a bear.'

"Choiseul, finding the prince invulnerable, attempted to debase him in the opinion of the people. He pitied France governed by a prince, whose rugged disposition even ladies could not soften; and declared, that when the dauphin became king, he would not remain his minister a single moment. The traitor neglected nothing to destroy the confidence between the monarch and the heir to the throne. More than once he dared charge the son with crimes before the tribunal of the father: he was seen himself hawking about in companies a pamphlet against the dauphin, which was in fact a rhapsody of his own composing, in which the author proved, that the minister might be cried up as a great genius, and yet not possess the qualification of writing slander in his own language with correctness.

"The dauphin being suddenly attacked by a disease of languor, *which was reckoned by no means natural*, the eyes of *all France* were turned on him, who had so many reasons to dread his

reign. Suspicion pursued the duke of Choiseul: execrations of his name were mingled with the accents of the public grief. Despair accused of a secret act of guilt one, whose whole administration was but a series of known crimes."

In this passage I find only accusations, without proofs of a crime acknowledged to have been committed in *secret*.

Observations on a similar Charge, accusing FREDERIC II. *of the Assassination of* LEWIS XV.

THOUGH the councils of kings do not scruple to commit odious crimes, and think in general that conscience is only for private individuals; though the Prussian monarchy, assailed by France, Austria, Sweden, Russia, a part of the Germannic empire, &c. was in danger, and Maria Theresa had sworn to reduce it to the marquisate of Brandenburg; and though, the dauphin having displayed opposite principles of conduct with regard to foreign powers, the death of the king would change the aspect of affairs: yet the subsequent conduct of Frederic, his private character, his ordinary means of attaining his object, do not allow us to give the least credit to writ-

ings, which have accused him of this crime, or shall accuse him of it hereafter.

The faction of the duke of Choiseul, who had interested reasons for accusing Frederic, did not foresee, that it would be in turn accused of the preceding crime, in the commission of which it was equally interested. *See above, p.* 19.

TREATIES

BETWEEN

FRANCE AND THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA,

WHICH ELUCIDATE THE FIRST VOLUME OF THESE MEMOIRS.

Treaty of Alliance and Friendship concluded between Maria Theresa, Empress-queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and Lewis XV., King of France and Navarre, on the 1st of May, 1756; signed by Count de Staremberg, in the Name of the Empress, and by Rouillé and the Abbé de Bernis, in that of the King of France.

HER majesty the empress-queen, and his majesty the king of France, having concluded a neutral convention, which has this day been signed by their respective ministers-plenipotentiary, with the view of preventing the flames of war which may be kindled by the differences that have arisen between France and England about their boundaries and respective possessions in America, from spreading by degrees, and disturbing the tranquillity and good understanding which now happily subsists between their majesties: Her majesty the empress-queen, and his most christian majesty, persisting in these

very salutary views, and desiring to strengthen more and more, and to perpetuate their bands of most sincere amity and perfect union, have deemed it expedient to add to the above neutrality a treaty of friendship and union purely defensive, and no way tending to the prejudice of any other power; with the sole view of establishing peace on a more solid foundation in their respective kingdoms and states, and of contributing, as far as lies in their power, to the maintenance of general tranquillity. For these ends the following articles are agreed on:

ARTICLE I.

There shall be a sincere and lasting friendly union between her majesty the empress-queen of Hungary, and his majesty the king of France, their heirs, successors, kingdoms, states, provinces, countries, subjects, and vassals, without exception. The high contracting powers shall, in consequence of this agreement, use their utmost endeavours for preserving between themselves and their aforesaid states and subjects a reciprocity of friendship and good understanding, without permitting any act of hostility, under any cause or pretence, by avoiding whatever might in the sequel do away the union and harmony established between them, and on the contrary, by contributing with all their power,

and on every occasion, to their mutual convenience, honour, and prosperity.

II.

The treaty of Westphalia in 1648, and all the treaties of peace and friendship, which have been concluded since that epoch, and now subsist between their aforesaid majesties, and in particular the convention or deed of neutrality signed on this day, are renewed and confirmed by the present treaty in an improved manner, and as if they were specified word for word.

III.

Her majesty the empress-queen promises and engages to guaranty and defend all the kingdoms, states, provinces, and demesnes, actually possessed in Europe by his most christian majesty, as well in her own name as on behalf of her successors and heirs without exception, against the attacks of every power, and for ever. With the single exception, however, of the actual war against England, and conformably to the convention or deed of neutrality concluded this day.

IV.

His most christian majesty becomes pledged to her imperial majesty, her successors, and heirs, according to the order of descent established in her family by the pragmatic sanction, to guaranty and defend against the attacks of all powers,

and for ever, the kingdoms, states, and dominions actually possessed by her in Europe, without exception.

V.

As a consequence of this reciprocal guaranty, the high contracting powers invariably agree in such measures as may appear the best calculated for the preservation of peace; and should the states of either be threatened with invasion, they will, in order to prevent such invasion, act as mediators in the most efficacious manner.

VI.

But as their promised mediations may not have the desired effect, their majesties enter into a mutual engagement, from the present period, to assist each other with a corps of twenty-four thousand men, in case either should be attacked, by any power or under any pretence, the present war between England and France being alone excepted.

VII.

The corps of aids shall consist of eighteen thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry. These shall begin their march in six weeks, or at the latest, two months, after being called for by the high contracting power, whose possessions may be attacked or threatened with invasion. The troops in question shall be kept up at the expence of the high contracting power to whom

they belong. The power who receives their assistance shall afford them winter-quarters; but the party who requires assistance shall be at liberty to demand an equivalent in money instead of the stipulated number of men, which money shall be paid in species monthly, and the amount fixed, without any further demand on either side, or on any pretext, at eight thousand imperial florins for each thousand infantry, and twenty thousand florins for the same number of cavalry.

VIII.

Her majesty the empress-queen, and his majesty the king of France are at liberty to concur in inviting other powers to enter into this defensive treaty.

Stipulations of the Treaty of Alliance, Offensive and Defensive, between the Empress, MARIA THERESA, *and* LEWIS XV., *signed at Versailles, on the 30th of December, 1758, by Count de* STAREMBERG, *in the Name of the Empress, and in that of the King, by the Duke of* CHOISEUL.

ARTICLE I.

THE empress and the king confirm the treaty of the 1st of May, 1756, which forms the basis of the present convention.

II.

The auxiliaries stipulated by that treaty, of eighteen thousand infantry, and six thousand cavalry, shall be furnished to Austria by France, during the actual war, in men, or money, at the option of the empress.

III.

The supply in money shall be paid by twelve instalments, month after month. It is rated at three million four hundred thousand florins a-year.

IV.

The treaty of Stockholm, between Austria, France, and Sweden, is ratified. Lewis XV. engages to pay Sweden the subsidy, which the empress and the king had agreed to pay conjointly.

V.

The king undertakes the payment of the Saxon troops, which are to be under the orders of the empress-queen.

VI.

Austria and France engage to procure indemnifications and satisfaction to the king of Poland, elector of Saxony; as also the restoration of his states.

VII.

The king is bound to send a hundred thousand men into Germany, for the defence of the

Austrian Low-countries, and that of the states of the empire, against the king of Prussia and his allies.

VIII.

It having been found necessary, for the security of the coasts of Flanders, that Ostend and Nieuport should be garrisoned by France, this trust remains confirmed during the war, without prejudice to the rights of sovereignty belonging to the empress.

IX.

And the king, notwithstanding, promises to restore the above two places, even prior to a peace with England, if a separate clause, to this effect, be made in the treaty.

X.

The empress shall possess the sovereignty of the countries, which may be wrested from the king of Prussia on the Lower Rhine: but the revenues of those countries shall belong to the king, with the exception of forty thousand florins, destined to defray the administration of them.

XI.

The contracting parties engage to bring to an amicable settlement all such disputes, as may arise between them; and those which are pending relative to Lorraine, and the boundaries of the Low-countries.

XII.

France engages to exert every effort during the war, as well as during the negotiations for peace, in order to procure from Prussia the cession of Silesia, and of the county of Glatz, to her majesty the empress-queen.—The king engages, before-hand, to make France the guarantee between Austria and Prussia. This condition is the *sine quâ non* of all the treaties concluded, and of such as may be concluded.

XIII.

The contracting parties engage to make no peace, or truce, but in conjunction. The king engages to make neither peace nor truce of any kind with England, without stipulating, that he will do every thing in his power to induce Prussia to grant the empress honourable terms; or, at least, without exacting from the English a promise, that they will no longer assist the king of Prussia. On her side, the empress engages to make neither peace nor truce with Prussia, but on the same conditions.

XIV.

The treaty of Westphalia is ratified. Sweden is invited to accede to the present treaty.

XV.

The empress renounces her right to the reversion of the duchies of Parma, Placencia,

and Guastalla, in favour of the male descendants of the infant don Philip. The event of the extinction of the male line is an exception.

XVI.

The parties engage to aid the duke of Parma in inducing the king of the two Sicilies to settle the order of succession to that kingdom.

XVII.

The king of France promises to induce the king of Naples to cede to the emperor the claims on the allodial possessions of the two houses of Medicis and Farnese.

XVIII.

The infant, duke of Parma, is to renounce his rights and claims to the allodial possessions and towns of Brozzolo and Sabionnetta. A *sine quâ non* condition of the renunciation made by the empress of his right of reversion, claimed by her.

XIX.

France engages to employ its influence in causing the archduke Joseph to be elected king of the Romans.

XX.

France and Austria will concert measures in favour of a prince of Saxony, in case of an election for a king of Poland.

XXI.

The empress having agreed with the duke of

Modena, to marry the archduke Leopold with the princess of Modena, and wishing to obtain of the emperor and the empire the survivorship of the feudal inheritance of Modena in favour of Leopold, on condition that the states of Modena shall never be united to the main possessions of the house of Austria:—the king of France promises to promote this measure by his good offices.

XXII.

The emperor, Russia, Sweden, and Poland, shall be invited to accede to the present treaty. (The remainder relates to diplomatic formalities.)

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

T. Davison,
White-Friars.